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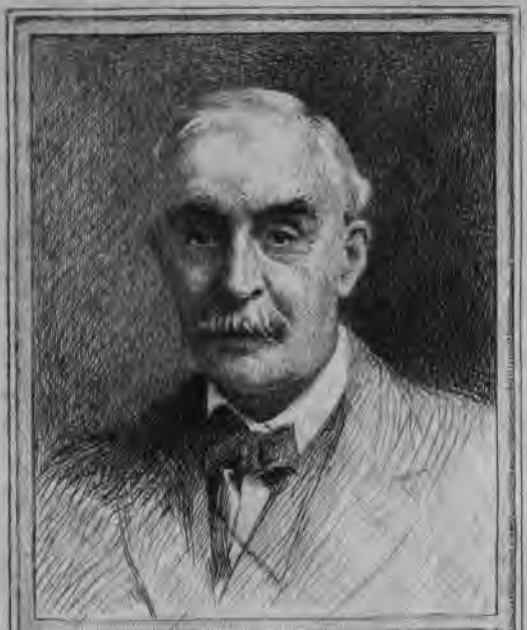

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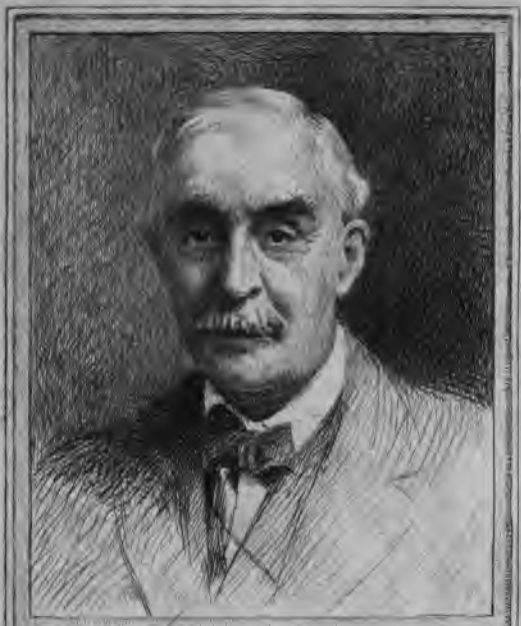

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VIEWS OF THE DEITY,

Traditional and Scientific.

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VIEWS OF THE DEITY,

Traditional and Scientific;

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

By JAMES SAMUELSON,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER AT LAW; FOUNDER, AND FORMERLY EDITOR OF THE 'QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE.'

POST TENEBRAS LUX.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

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INTRODUCTION.

THE most extraordinary phenomenon in the history of Man is the influence which the study of theology or the consideration of the Divine nature has exercised and continues to exercise in his relations with his fellow-men.

The word "congregation," applied chiefly to a body of worshippers holding views in common regarding the Deity, sufficiently denotes the intimate bond of association arising from such a community of thought and sentiment, whilst on the other hand the term "sect" is equally expressive of the isolation and the distance which exist between bodies of men whose views on the most important of all topics are at variance. As betwixt societies of men, so it is between individuals. It may be that two persons whose theological views are unknown to each other have conceived a mutual regard, and entertain a sincere friendship for one another, until at some unhappy moment one of them discovers that the other is an "infidel," that he does not believe in a physical Heaven or Hell, doubts the infallibility of either the New or Old Testament, or in some other way differs from his

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friend on what that one considers a material article of theological faith. It would be strange indeed if after such a discovery confidence between the two friends remained undiminished, their friendship undisturbed; it would not be at all strange if suspicion obtruded itself where before no doubt had existed; if the most disinterested acts assumed the aspect of selfishness, and if in every kindly word there seemed to lurk a hidden meaning which must be gravely scanned, and carefully conned over before it could be accepted as sincere, for "is he not an infidel, does he not doubt or deny what I have been taught is essential to Salvation?"

Again, an author accustomed to write on scientific subjects, who may have gained the approval of his orthodox readers, ventures to hint in one of his writings that he prefers the Darwinian theory of the descent of Man to the account of his creation as recorded in Genesis, or that he entertains grave doubts on the subject of Jonah's protracted stay in the body of the whale, or on any of those matters which form the basis of belief with the majority of his readers, when lo! the charm of his productions has vanished in an instant. He, too, is an infidel, an atheist, an envoy of the Subtle One, whose every word must now be regarded with suspicion as intended to undermine the eternal happiness and welfare of the faithful. And still more fatal would it be to the peace of mind of such an author if he should venture to publish the theological lessons that have been taught him by the experience of a lifetime

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spent in the study of nature and the earnest investigation of her laws, if those teachings failed to support the prejudices and preconceptions of the orthodox. Such a venture would inevitably secure for him more enemies in twenty-four hours than he had made friends during the whole of his previous literary career.

And how is it possible to account for these strange phenomena; to explain why, in their love of God and their holy zeal for the true faith, men have perpetrated more direful horrors, have instigated more terrible persecutions, fostered greater bitterness of heart, and been guilty of worse cruelty than from any other cause, physical or moral? One explanation is to be found in that greed for material possessions and for temporal aggrandisement and authority which has often accompanied the belief of certain men that they were the ministers of the Most High; for it is this desire for temporal as well as spiritual supremacy that has led to the iniquities which have been practised under the sacred guise of religion, rather than any zeal in the cause of divine truth. But there is another source of religious oppression and intolerance, and that is to be found in the very quarter from which we might expect it to be entirely absent. The priests and clergy of all creeds and denominations, to whom the world owes so much, who have ever held up the Deity (by whatever name they may have designated Him) to human reverence and esteem; who have always been ready to espouse

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the cause of mercy and charity; have comforted and consoled their fellow-men in times of sickness and distress; and who in the final hour, when all human hopes and joys are about to depart, and mortals expect to be called upon to give an account of their stewardship here below, have been amongst the last to cheer men on their road to heaven; those, strangely enough, have ever been the bitterest and most cruel enemies of religious liberty. They have watched with keen jealousy the researches and investigations of philosophers whose novel theories threatened those cherished traditions in the belief of which they had been educated as being indispensable to Salvation; and have denounced as "rationalists" and "infidels," men who sought to explain or remove, by means which the Almighty has placed at their disposal, gigantic evils which the priesthood have considered to be remediable only by their prayers and exorcisms.

A further reason is that whilst men are bound to adduce positive evidence in proof of a scientific position or doctrine, the field of theology is to a large extent one of speculation and surmise. At least, so it has been hitherto. If a man knew that it would be as incumbent upon him in argument to prove the triune nature of the Deity, as it is for a mathematician to prove that two sides of any triangle are greater than the third, he would not only be less positive in the terms of his statement, but instead of denouncing and despising another who happens to have been educated

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in a different faith, he would endeavour to learn from him the ground of his dissent in order that he might establish or correct his own belief.

And that is just the happy result which is beginning to accrue from the attempt to study theology in a systematic manner. When men, instead of clinging to their old traditions and prejudices and contemning the grandest revelations of modern science because they conflict with those preconceptions, shall have gathered together from the physical universe, as well as from the pages of history, all the materials necessary for a true understanding of the nature of that God who is now, as of old, often ignorantly worshipped, then will theology, instead of being the bone of contention which keeps men asunder and narrows their intellects, become the broadest, grandest, and the most edifying of all sciences which the human mind can grasp and study. This truth is already beginning to dawn upon mankind, and it is the object of the author of these pages, a layman addressing the laity who are beginning to think for themselves, to indicate the direction which, in his humble view, such studies are likely to take in the future, and to suggest one of many methods of thought which may be useful to scientific theologians. When, however, he says, "a layman addressing the laity," it is far from the author's wish to cast a slur upon the priesthood of any denomination; and to those large-minded and liberal ministers of religion who are to be found alike amongst Christians, Jews, and so

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far as his experience has enabled him to judge, amongst Parsees, and in other oriental denominations, the following imperfect outlines will, he hopes, not be without some interest. But the materials for the composition of a systematic book on theology are not yet at hand. In order to form anything like a correct conception of the Deity and to study his attributes, we require data which are at present either uncertain or wholly wanting. It is impossible to ascertain with accuracy at what particular period in the history of Man he gave expression to this or that view of the Deity, inasmuch as the most contrary opinions exist, even amongst theologians of one and the same school, as to the chronology of their sacred writings. Hence it is most difficult to trace the development of the image of God as it has been reflected in the human mind. And so, too, in science, there is hardly a theory of importance which is not debated and controverted; and until we are in full possession of at least all the leading facts in the history of creation it will be impossible to deduce with accuracy the laws which are based thereon—the laws of the Creator. In order to add to this perplexity, we find that the students of theology, the believers in revelation as the infallible guide of Man in all matters of theological faith (and who arrogate to themselves the sole claim to communion with the Deity), and the apostles of science, instead of coming to each other's aid in their incapacity and ignorance, stand aloof from one another, each

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watching with hatred, fear, and jealousy, every step which the other attempts to make in advance.

These circumstances naturally multiply the difficulties of those who seek to obtain a glimpse of the Deity as He is revealed in nature and tradition, and they must serve as an additional excuse for the inaccuracies, and there will doubtless be many, in the following essay, concerning the plan of which little need be added. The first Part is devoted to the contemplation of pictures of the Deity, transferred from the pages of tradition. They have been sketched from the Veda, the Old Testament, the four Gospels, and the devotional works of modern Christians, including Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Wesleyans, Independents, and Unitarians; and in the concluding chapter of that part of the work an effort has been made to collect into one survey those various conceptions of the Godhead. In the second Part it has been attempted to systematise the study of His attributes as reflected in nature, but the merest outline is presented to the reader, to be filled up from the treasures of Science, by abler minds, should any be found willing to adopt the scheme shadowed forth. Here the author, after having briefly, but as frankly as possible, dealt with the conflict between Science and Orthodoxy, a conflict which it is as dishonest as it is futile to conceal or deny, has availed himself of the observations of the most advanced scientific thinkers and investigators of the day, rather than of his own

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limited experience, to trace by the inductive method the existence and action of God in nature. In so doing he has retained as far as possible the terms and ideas extant and familiar to the general reader, concerning physical and vital force and the operation of those forces. He has sought to explain why the argument from design has been so violently assailed and wherein it has failed, and has endeavoured to re-state that argument upon a broader and he trusts a more permanent basis.

Finally, after devoting a brief chapter to the consideration of the realms of nature in which the perfections of God may be made the subjects of an edifying study, the author has essayed to combine in one view, the two revelations of Him as they are seen in science and in tradition, and the more prominent features of which are found to coincide, and to present a real and lifelike image of Him whom no human eye has seen.

As it has been already stated, the author claims for his essay only a suggestive value, and there is one injunction with which he would accompany its publication. Let not his adverse criticisms upon any phase of faith, even if they should seem unjust or severe, lead the disciple of that faith to believe that his religion is contemned. It is very difficult for a writer, born and nurtured in theological liberty and accustomed all his life to criticism, to feel the bonds which fetter the reason of those who have been rigidly trained as

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members of a sect, or fully to understand and appreciate the devotion with which those sacred bonds are regarded by their wearers; and therefore he may be apt to let his thoughts and pen run riot a little when he treats of what appear to him to be theological errors. But the reader is earnestly asked to believe, first, that the author respects all sincere worshippers of whatever faith, and that nothing is farther from his wish than to wound their feelings; and secondly, that he is deeply impressed with the fact that every religion which has for its object the elevation of Man, is in so far a true religion as it is the direct influence or inspiration of a perfect God into imperfect human minds.

This principle applies equally, as a matter of course, to the original views enunciated in the following essay; and if that appears to the reader to contain offensive errors, let him attribute them to the fallible reason and imperfect knowledge of the author, and let him seek to benefit by what appears to be true, ennobling or hope-inspiring, for that at least he may feel satisfied proceeds from Him concerning whom these pages seek, however unworthily, to treat.

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PART I.

TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF THE DEITY.

It was by a slow process that the human mind elaborated the idea of one supreme Godhead.—MAX MÜLLER.

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I.

THE VEDIC PICTURE OF GOD.

"That which is One, the wise call it in divers manners."

THE VEDA.

IN the earliest historic period, farther back than we can chronologically determine, when the "vital spark of heavenly flame" seems first to have been kindled in our race, experience and observation had already taught man that he was a dependent creature, and the phase of his mind which we call the imagination had aided him, even as it assists us to-day, to form some idea of the Higher Being from whom he derived his support. Our chief and most trustworthy guide in tracing even the faintest outline of this early conception of the Divine Existence is the newborn science of language, which has been so successfully cultivated by the writer whose thoughts form the motto for this section of our work; and that science teaches us that the primitive religion of man was a simple admiration, perhaps adoration, of the visible universe. He observed the sun to rise and set, the moon following in its wake. He heard the thunder roll in the clouds, saw the lightning flash in the sky; and the expressions, "Deity" and "Divine," which have descended even to our time, testify that the bright phenomena of the heavens first awakened in his soul sentiments of awe, of wonder, and of adoration.*

* In the Vedas, the sacred writings of the Brahmans, "the gods are called Deva. This word in Sanskrit means bright; brightness or

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Four thousand years ago, it may be, those thoughts concerning the nature of the Deity had already begun to assume a definite shape upon the tablets of the human mind; and, rude though it be and inartistic, the picture is still calculated to excite our admiration. The outline appears to us confused and indistinct, but that is not to be wondered at. A French writer once said, that, in order to be able to reason with accuracy upon the nature of instinct, a man ought to have dwelt some time in the brain of an insect, and yet not to be an insect; and so, in order to estimate the old Aryan conception of God, we ought to have lived amongst that people, and yet to have studied their thoughts and feelings with the minds of modern Europeans. But all we can do towards the attainment of that impossible end is mentally to compare their ideas, as expressed by the Vedic poets, with the religious songs of our own days; and here we encounter the difficulty that whilst the hymns of the Vedas were probably the very highest manifestations of religious thought in that early age, we have no means of judging to what extent they were understood and appreciated by the multitude; just as it will be impossible four thousand years hence for a theological student to deduce the religious views entertained by the masses in our own time from

light being one of the most general attributes shared by the various manifestations of the Deity invoked in the Veda: as Sun, or Sky, or Fire, or Dawn, or Storm. We can see in fact how in the minds of the poets of the Veda, deva from meaning bright came gradually to mean divine." This extract and the others in this chapter, referring to the Brahminical deity, are taken from Prof. Max Müller's Lecture on the Vedas, in the work by that author called 'Chips from a German Workshop,' vol. i. Longmans, 1867. See also his Lectures on the Science of Religion, 'Frazer's Magazine,' April to July, 1870. Longmans.

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such of our sacred songs as posterity may deem worthy of preservation. In certain respects, however, the picture of the God of the Brahmans will be found to resemble the modern Trinitarian view of the Deity; and it will be as perplexing for the theologian of the future to comprehend the circumstances under which one or other of the three persons of the Godhead is appealed to by worshippers of the same or of different creeds, as it is difficult for us to understand why the Vedic hymn is addressed now to Indra, then to Varuna; now to Soma, or again to Agni; each being in turn exalted as the greatest of the Gods. And yet we are told there was but one God, and that "That which is One, the wise call it in divers manners, they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan;" . . . . "they call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni." This confusion in the picture we must therefore accept as the inevitable result of an obscure antiquity, a clouded past, and of our own feeble vision.

Still it was a grand tableau of the Deity, for it was drawn from the universe itself; and, like all such visions, it was, to the orthodox, a revealed, an inspired view of the Creator!

God was Nature—Nature's phenomena, Nature's forces. The dawn of day awakens Man from his slumbers, whilst:

> "Sun and Moon go on in regular succession that we may see *Indra** and believe. . . . .
>
> When Indra hurls again and again his thunderbolt then they believe the brilliant god."

He is omnipresent, but whether as nature itself, or as a

* The designations of the Deity are here intentionally italicised to show how they varied.

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Person behind and yet pervading nature, it is difficult to say:

"This earth too, belongs to *Varuna* the King, and this wide sky with its ends far apart; the two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also contained in this small drop of water. He who would flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna the King. His spies proceed from Heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth."

He is omniscient as well:

"If a man thinks he is walking by stealth the gods know it all. If a man stands or walks or hides; if he goes to lie down or to get up; what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third."

By his omniscience and almighty power he rules the world, and he governs it with order and with love:

"He who knows the place of the birds that fly through the sky, who on the waters knows the ships:—He the upholder of order who knows the twelve months with the offspring of each. . . . . He who knows the track of the wind, of the wide, the bright, the mighty; and knows those who reside on high . . . . he the wise sits there to govern. From thence perceiving all wondrous things, he sees what has been, and what will be done. May he the wise *Âditya* make our paths straight all our days, may he prolong our lives."

But the heaven in which the Aryan God sits enthroned, grand though it be, is, like many a modern heaven, a material one:

"Where there is eternal light; in the world where the Sun is placed, in that immortal imperishable world, place me O *Soma!*

Where King *Vaivasvata* reigns; where the secret place of heaven is, where these mighty waters are, there make me immortal!

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Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant there make me immortal!"

And carnal it is, as well as material:

"Where wishes and desires are . . . . where there is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where the desires of our desire are attained, there make me immortal!"

The Vedic Deity is beneficent and bountiful; the giver of all good gifts:

"O God (Indra) have mercy, give me my daily bread. . . . . Raise up wealth to the worshipper thou mighty *Dawn*. . . . . Thou art the giver of horses, Indra, thou art the giver of cows, the giver of corn, the strong lord of wealth: the old guide of man disappointing no desires: to him we address this song. . . . . All this wealth around here is known to be thine alone; take from it, Conqueror! bring it hither. . . . .

Thou the love of all who givest us food; who givest us wealth in cows, horses and chariots . . . . give us riches high and wide. . . . .

*Agni** accept this log which I offer to thee, accept this my service. . . . . Thou Lord of wealth and giver of wealth, be thou wise and powerful. . . . . He gives us rain from heaven . . . . he gives us food a thousand fold."

And a frowning God, he can be also; a God of war as well as peace:

"A victory to the warriors when he visits their camp. . . . .

From battle to battle thou advancest bravely, from town to town thou destroyest this with might. . . . .

Thou hast felled down with the chariot wheel these seventy kings of men who had attacked the friendless Susravas and gloriously the sixty thousand and ninety-nine forts. Thou Indra hast succoured Susravas with thy succours."

---

* Meaning "Fire."

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But a God, as merciful as he is strong:

"Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone wrong; have mercy Almighty, have mercy!"

Although he hates sin, he shows mercy even to sinners; and favours the just and good:

"Absolve us from the sins of our Fathers and from those which we committed with our bodies. . . . .

It was not our doing O Varuna, it was temptation, an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. . . . .

Thou, Indra, never findest a rich man to be thy friend, wine-swillers despise thee. . . . .

However we break thy laws from day to day, men as we are O God Varuna; do not deliver us unto death nor to the blow of the furious, nor to the wrath of the spiteful. . . . .

Varuna is merciful even to him who has committed sin. . . . .

Was it an old sin O Varuna that thou wishest to destroy the friend who always praises thee!

Tell me thou unconquerable Lord and I will quickly turn to Thee with praise, freed from sin!

His path is easy and without thorns who does what is right. . .

The kind mortal is greater than the great in heaven. . . . .

He who gives alms goeth to the highest place in heaven, he goes to the Gods."

The Vedic God has intimate relations with the worshipper who seeks to approach him:

"Yearning for him, the far-seeing, my thoughts move onwards as kine move to their pastures. . . . .

Sharpen my mind like the edge of iron; whatever I now may utter longing for Thee, do thou accept it, make me possessed of God."

And finally, He is the Divine Creator of all things, a

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wise Being to whom worship and meditation are due and were believed to be acceptable:

> "He, the creator of the earth: or he, righteous who created the heaven; he also created the bright and mighty waters. . . . .
>
> Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments, heaven and earth. . . . .
>
> Thou O wise God art Lord of all, of heaven and earth. . . . .
> Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine creator, may he rouse our minds."

These are the most important details of the picture; these the features which will be presented to us again and again as we travel down the stream of religious thought in Man, but if we draw back a few paces, and seek to grasp the whole conception of the Vedic Godhead as it presented itself to his adorers, with the heaven in which he dwelt, we find the task more difficult.

Kneeling on earth, the imagination of his worshippers influences, and is in turn affected by the varied aspects of the Deity enthroned above. Reason suggests that he is One, for all the powers he wields appear directed to one end, the order of the universe, embracing, too, the happiness of Man. And yet, how could one person stand alone in the performance of such miracles? Could he, alone, ride forth each morn upon the sun, each night upon the moon; flash lightning from the skies; roll in the thunder; break up the clouds in torrents, or distil the gentle rain? Could he cause plants to grow and sprout; their flowers to ripen into seeds and luscious fruits; give life to animals and man? Could this same God lead warriors to battle now, and then raise up the tend'rest

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sentiments of love and pity in the human breast? Those varied acts demand not one but many Deities of varying powers; and yet they seem to work in harmony, a union so complete that after all they must be One. So now 'tis Indra, now Varuṇa; next 'tis Agni, God of Fire; then Ushas, Goddess of the Dawn, or Maruts God of Storms, of whom the worshipper by turns obtains a glimpse whilst gazing upwards into heaven and essaying to scale its heights. But what he fails to see is One Divinity, immutable amidst the shifting scenes of nature.

Thus, even in that early age there sate a venerable God on high in a material heaven, ruling in wisdom and in power: a King possessing mortal passions, and stepping down from time to time to mingle with his earthly subjects, to aid or thwart their plans, direct their individual acts and thoughts; reward their virtues, or chastise their sins. Around his throne there stood the lesser gods and heroes; mortals raised up from earth to dwell with Him in heaven, and there to taste immortal joys perhaps as gross and carnal as the pleasures of this world, but unalloyed with pain and disappointment. Those were the courtiers and attendants of the many-featured Vedic God.

Before this earliest picture of the Deity is allowed to pass, let us for a moment consider what it teaches us regarding the people by whom it was painted. Reflecting, as it does (and as all conceptions of the Deity have ever done), the nature of the men who worshipped him, it shows us that even in that primeval stage they possessed all the moral and immoral propensities of modern civilised communities. Intoxication, violence in drink, and gambling, are already

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mentioned as sins to be avoided. The inordinate love of riches is deprecated, even whilst wealth, pastoral of course amongst an agricultural people, is directly asked in prayer; indeed the only difference between the Aryan and modern Man in that respect appears to be, that the former was a little more honest and ingenuous in the terms of his petition. The thirst for glory, too, was prominent amongst the passions of our race, and the warrior chiefs who, in our day, issue proclamations in regard to victories with which the Almighty crowns their arms, differ but in a small degree from him of old, who through the favour of the Deity and with his aid, gloriously captured the "sixty thousand and ninety-nine forts," and who "advanced from town to town" in pools of blood. A trifle less exaggeration now, and a little more humanity, perhaps, in the treatment of the wounded; there the distinction terminates. But on the other hand, that the kind mortal is "greater than the great in heaven," and alms-giving warmly recommended; these indicate the presence of the higher qualities of love and charity in men; whilst the repentant tone, the frequent repetition of the prayer that sin may be avoided, and the noblest ends attained; those, coupled with the oft-repeated praise of the Divine Ideal, whose titles always indicated greatness and beneficence, indisputably prove that even then our ancestors possessed a firm conviction of their heavenly origin and destiny. And so the contemplation of this crude, imperfect, outline of the Godhead, teaches us that in the earliest age Man was a sinning, but repentant creature, born to toil and pleasure intermixed, with aspirations after peace, and joy, and final rest above.

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II.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL.

"I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them."—EXODUS vi., v. 3.

IT is not our intention to trench more than is absolutely necessary upon the debatable ground of controversial theology, or it might be deemed necessary, before we seek to obtain a glimpse of the Semitic Deity in the sacred writings of the past, to inquire whether or not the Hebrews were true monotheists. A few reflections on this head may perhaps arise incidentally out of the contemplation of the picture of "Jehovah," but it may be as well to state that the controversy does not appear to the author to possess the importance which certain learned writers have thought fit to attach to it.* For there are two kinds of monotheism, the one which recognises an omnipresent Deity, the Ruler of the universe, the Father of the whole human race, and the guardian of life in all its phases and aspects, the other a belief in a God whose care is bestowed upon some particular race or section of the human family; a faith which never concerns itself about the possibility of other gods, or any Providence for less highly favoured peoples, or which tacitly admits the existence of inferior deities, all of whom are however pretenders, and but second-

* *Vide* Semitic Monotheism in Professor Max Müller's 'Chips from a German Workshop,' and the works of Renan there noticed.

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ary in comparison with "our true God." All the evidence that can be extracted from the earlier portions of the Old Testament tends to show that the monotheism of the ancient Hebrews was of the latter kind, and some of its spirit has been transmitted not only to their modern descendants, but it has also found its way into the faith of many Christian denominations, who, although they do not openly proclaim it to the world, still believe that theirs is the true faith, and that they are a people specially favoured by the Almighty.

But if it be not our province to enter upon polemical debate, there is another treatment of the subject which demands our earnest consideration, and which will have to be kept constantly in mind throughout this and the two succeeding chapters, namely, the gradual expansion of the contracted and anthropomorphic monotheism of the early Hebrews, into the broad unitarian theology of the great Master; and if the question be scientifically and dispassionately investigated, it will be found that the developmental theory is just as applicable to the human mind in its conception of the Deity, as it is to the visible and material operations of nature, by the observation of which the divine image has been to a large extent moulded. It was formerly thought, and is still believed by some, that the Almighty has from time to time brought new forms of life into being, by a special and immediate interference with the regular order of nature; that is to say, that He temporarily suspended or changed His known laws in order to produce new types of existence, *per saltum*, but that scientific creed is being displaced by the theory that all changes in the material world have been brought about slowly and almost imperceptibly by the Almighty power, acting through what are

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termed secondary causes, but in complete accordance with recognised laws, and by means of the ordinary processes of nature. So, too, the popular theology of to-day represents one Deity revealed through Moses, another God of a somewhat higher order proclaimed to Man it may be through Isaiah, and a third whose character is supposed by many to have been for the first time unfolded by Jesus Christ. These conceptions of the Divinity are believed to have been promulgated direct from Heaven; some think in ordinary human language, or by the descent in person of the Most High to dwell for a time amongst men. And this belief is not confined to modern Jews and Christians, but something analogous to it will be found to pervade most other human creeds.

It will be seen, however, from an unprejudiced study of theological history, that there have been no such distinct creations of the Divine Ideal, but a gradual elaboration of a more and more exalted conception of the Deity in the minds of good and holy men, beginning with the dawn of religious thought, and, so far as the Semitic race is concerned, culminating in the God and Father of Jesus Christ. And excepting to those who are incapable of seeing more than one side of an argument, or whose previous education renders them unwilling to apply the same rules of thought to sacred as to secular inquiries, it will be obvious that the conception of the Deity has been formed by a gradual accumulation of metaphysical traits; that the Divinity has been becoming more and more divine, if such an expression be allowable, as the thoughts of men have expanded; and as a necessary corollary, that the image, or more correctly speaking, the reality, will appear more exalted still, con-

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sentaneously with the growth of every phase of the human intellect, and side by side with the extended comprehension of natural and moral phenomena.

If this view of the development of the Divine Ideal be correct, it follows that it would be useless to attempt at one glance to survey His picture as it was present in the minds of the Hebrews at different stages of their history. For whilst at one time He is only the "Lord God of the Hebrews,"* at another period He is the Deity before whom it is said "all nations shall come and worship";† and, later on, that to His light "the Gentiles shall come."‡ No single sketch, be it ever so imperfect, can be drawn of the Divinity who commanded Moses:§ "Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering," but of whom David sang,‖ "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." We will therefore arrest the passing scene twice or thrice, to contemplate the varying aspects of the great Being who towers higher and higher above the crowd of mortals by whom He is surrounded in the sacred story.

In the beginning His word alone sufficed to create all things; to bring order out of chaos:

> "God said, Let there be light, and there was light. . . . .
> Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. . . . .

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* Exodus ix., v. i.
† Psalm lxxxvi., v. 9.
‡ Isaiah lx., v. 3.
§ Exodus xxv., v. 2.
‖ Psalm li., vv. 16 and 17. As the reader is supposed to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and a frequent reference to notes would interfere with the continuity of the review, those will be omitted hereafter.

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> Let the earth bring forth grass . . . . and the earth brought forth grass. . . . .
>
> And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven . . . . and it was so.
>
> And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature . . . . and it was so.
>
> And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness. . . . .
>
> In the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them."

But it will be observed that there is a distinction in the terms which announce the creation of Man, indicative of a closer affinity between the Creator and him, than between Him and His other works. He did not simply "ordain" man's existence; He created him and breathed His own life into his body. Whilst this belief in the mode of his creation caused Man to feel that he stood nearer to the Almighty than his humbler companions (or it may be that the perception of his nearer relationship gave rise to the belief—the effect is the same), it is not surprising that the same faith and intuition should have caused him to portray the Maker with many human qualities; and it will be found that man's superior strength over woman has also caused him with one single exception, that of the Roman Catholics (to be dealt with in a separate chapter), to endow him with male attributes only; to picture him as a man, to the exclusion of those tender sympathies which are peculiarly characteristic of the gentler sex.

At times He was an angry God; and that which appeared injurious in nature was believed to be the fruit of

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His anger. He made the earth itself the instrument of His wrath.

To Adam He said:

> "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . . .
>
> Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."

To the serpent He spake thus:

> "Thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life."

Coupled with human anger, we find in the Deity human regrets and disappointments:

> "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

And so He opened "the windows of heaven" and the "fountains of the deep":

> "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground."

After that, moved by the offerings of Noah:

> "The Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done."

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Nor is this the only instance when His anger was appeased by the intercession of some favourite son:

> "The Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people, now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, that I may consume them. . . . .
>
> And Moses besought the Lord his God and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"

And then Moses suggested to his Maker that the Egyptians would say He had merely brought the children of Israel out of Egypt "for mischief," to slay them in the mountain, and added:

> "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants to whom thou swarest by thine own self and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars in heaven. . . . .
>
> And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

That Man was created in God's physical as well as in His spiritual likeness, must undoubtedly have been an article of faith with the children of Israel, for references are repeatedly made to the corporeal parts and acts of the Deity:

> "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. . . . .
>
> And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou? . . . .
>
> Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them." . . . .

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And when Noah offered the sacrifice referred to above:

"The Lord smelled a sweet savour. . . . .

And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. . . . .

And he said, thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live . . . . thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen."

Like the Vedic deity, he was believed to enter into the bloody game of war with the zest and readiness of a human warrior:

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord. . . . .

The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name. . . . .

Thy right hand O Lord is become glorious in power, thy right hand O Lord hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

In His partiality for His chosen people He is represented as counselling and abetting acts which would be condemned in men:

"But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment, and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians. . . . .

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses, and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment; and the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians."

That a people who did these things, believing them to

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have the sanction of the Almighty, were to be ruled by fear rather than by love, is not surprising; and so we find the Lawgiver stern in His commands; and, in His punishment for their infraction, harsh and unrelenting. When He who would give no other account of Himself, even to the favoured instrument of His will, than, "I am that I am," came down from heaven to proclaim His commandments, He descended in fire, and threatened with instant death any who dared to touch the holy mountain on which He had alighted. He visited the sins of those who worshipped other gods, "upon the children unto the third and fourth generation":

> "For thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God. . . . .
>
> He that sacrificeth unto any God save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

His criminal code was terrible, and although it was no doubt absolutely necessary, it indicated the savage nature of the people for whom it was framed:

> "He that smiteth a man that he die shall surely be put to death. . . . .
>
> He that stealeth a man and selleth him . . . shall surely be put to death. . . . .
>
> He that smiteth . . . and he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. . . . .
>
> Life for life . . . eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."

This was the will of the Deity, who sanctioned the slave

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trade though He forbade man-stealing, and who is represented as placing but little value upon the life of a slave:

> "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished; notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money."

Bribery, extortion, and other sins are condemned, but in every case the fears of the people are appealed to, and not their sense of right. When the terrified nation so dreaded their God that:

> "They said unto Moses, speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die,"

he comforted them in these words,

> "Fear not, for God is come to prove you, that his fear may be before your faces and ye sin not."

Let us not dwell upon this picture. It represents at best a stern Lawgiver and Judge, Ruler of gods and men; a superior Patriarch, a venerable Jove, claiming undivided allegiance and worship. He curbed the wild passions of the nomad race who claimed Him as their own in prosperity, but turned away from Him at the first breath of adversity to "go a whoring" after other gods. He enjoined also respect to parents and to those in authority, forbade crime and the worst kinds of vice, and condescended to give directions as to the minutest details, not only of religious ceremony, but of domestic management. The divine and human are intimately associated in this first conception of the Jehovah who reigned over Israel. Whilst His commands were issued in a voice of thunder, and were

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surrounded by all the terrors with which priestcraft and superstition could invest them, the bolt which followed the infraction of his laws was often averted by the timely intercession of priestly and patriarchal wisdom and mercy, which made "atonement" for the sins that merited correction. He was no doubt a Deity well suited to that people and to those days, as he still continues to be a necessary element in modern artificial schemes of salvation; but we shall do well to pass on to a more exalted idea of Him whom no human eye has seen and no ear heard, and who being a Spirit can be worshipped in the spirit alone.

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III.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL—*continued.*

"There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God."—I. SAMUEL, chap. ii., v. 2.

ALTHOUGH we now leave behind us the picture of the stern Judge to approach that of the benignant Sovereign of the universe, still it is difficult to light upon a representation of Him entirely freed from that "fierce wrath" which has been so prominent a feature in the early Hebrew conception of the Divinity. Even when we find Him a spiritual Ruler; the holy, wise, adorable, self-existent Governor of the world, the old anger and vindictiveness sometimes break out, and are rendered more conspicuous by the expanded human sympathies of those by whom He is depicted.

Here is a well-known illustration taken from somewhat later times; God had ordered Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites—"man, woman, infant, suckling, ox, sheep, camel, ass"; but Saul spared Agag the king, and brought away "his sheep, oxen, and chief things that should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord in Gilgal." Samuel, however, the Priest of Israel, told Saul that God wanted obedience, not sacrifice. Perhaps he did not consider Saul quite so disinterested as he professed, in seeking to preserve Agag and his goods; but be that as it may, he ordered Agag to be brought to him, and not-

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withstanding the pleading of Saul, "Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal"; and God, to show His disapproval of Saul's forbearance and His approbation of the ferocious justice of Samuel, deposed the former and placed David on his throne.

But now let us reproduce for the first time a woman's picture of her God. Hannah says:

> "There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside Thee; neither is there any rock like our God. . . . .
>
> The Lord is a God of knowledge; by him actions are weighed. . . . .
>
> The Lord killeth and maketh alive. . . . The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; he bringeth low and lifteth up."

and with a true woman's sympathy,

> "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust."

And then the one true and only God stands forth unmistakably in David's sacred lays:

> "For the gods of the people are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. Glory and honour are in his presence. . . . Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. . . . .
>
> Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice, and let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth!
>
> The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork. . . . .
>
> O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

And Solomon, too, spreads His praise abroad, chanting the wisdom and goodness of the Infinite:

> "Behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built. . . . .
>
> Hear Thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven, and where Thou hearest, forgive."

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Even his wisdom, however, is incapable of perceiving that Jehovah is the God of the Gentile equally with the Hebrew; and he believes that the Holy One lends a more willing ear to his favoured people than to strangers. So he prays to Him that after He has found it necessary to punish the Jews for their misdeeds by such natural plagues as no doubt periodically visited their pastures, by "locusts," "mildew," and "caterpillars"; that then "if any man or the whole people make supplication and shall stretch forth their hands *in this house*," He should forgive. Afterwards he makes the same intercession for strangers, pilgrims, "not of Thy people Israel" who come "from a far country for Thy name sake." And the Almighty appeared to Solomon at night and promised him all he had prayed for.

Nor is the God of Israel yet the Father of his people. The best amongst them counts himself but as the servant of the Lord:

> "And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes O God; for Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come. . . . .
>
> What can David speak more to Thee for the honour of thy servant? For thou knowest thy servant."

For the Sons of God were at that period not men, but the angels; angels both of light and darkness:

> "There was a day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them."

But the chastisements of the Almighty had ceased to be regarded as the outpourings of his wrath, and were in some instances recognised as blessings:

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"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."

There is already a glimmering of a new tie between Man and his Maker. Often, indeed, there are expressions indicating the absence of a faith in immortality:*

"O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me; I should have been as though I had not been. . . . .

For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept, then had I been at rest. . . . .

Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death . . . the shadow of death without any order and where light is as darkness."

But now and then a negative or a distant hope appears:

"Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep."

And the wicked man it is who most apprehends annihilation:

"He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness. . . .
For what is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?"

Fitfully the belief in an undying spirit shines forth:

"But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

Whilst worldly wealth and pleasure still continue to be high rewards for obedience to God, and their deprivation is the punishment of evil-doers, the greatest treasure of His bestowing is wisdom:

"If they obey and serve him they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures. . . . .

* Some of these quotations are from Job, to which book a much greater antiquity is assigned by certain critics.

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The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment. . . . .

Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. . . . .

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo! he was not, yea I sought him but he could not be found."

As for wisdom:

"It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire. . . . .

No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies. . . . The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it."

And in this appreciation of wisdom we have the distinct reflection of the All-Wise himself, for:

"Whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? . . . God understandeth the way thereof, and knoweth the place thereof. . . . And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

The transition from the Judge to the Parent is presented to us in the Pastor and the Guardian:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . . He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

The humble and the penitent possess the greatest claim to His consideration:

"The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way. . . . .

The meek shall inherit the earth. . . . .

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Thou delightest not in burnt offering, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. . . . .

Offer thy God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

Gradually mercy and forgiveness are taking the place of angry retribution:

"For his anger endureth but a moment, in his favour is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

As the Divinity becomes milder, more paternal, more beneficent, so do "other gods" disappear, and the faith in the true God is established. To doubt His existence is now no longer treason, it is folly:

"The fool has said in his heart there is no God."

Neither is there a suspicion of Pantheism in the worship of the Deity. After the Psalmist has recounted the wondrous acts of God in nature, he says:

"O Lord how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all."

Still, sole and mighty as He is depicted, He is peculiarly the God of the Hebrews, their Jehovah. His enemies are theirs and theirs are His, and He is continually invoked to destroy them:

"That men may know that Thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the most high over all the earth. . . . .

Through God we shall do valiantly, for he shall tread down our enemies. . . . .

The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. . . . .

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But our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased. . . . .

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. . . .

The Lord has been mindful of us, he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron. . . . .

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth for ever and for ever. . . . .

Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel . . . I am God, even thy God. . . . .

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting."

This, then, is the matured picture of the God of Israel "whose way is perfect." The fierce Warrior-king of Heaven, the stern Judge is now receding from our sight; a holy, wise, and merciful Divinity supplies his place. He is the rock of ages, helping all his creatures, especially the poor, of whom He is the faithful guardian. His glories, to be sung with harp and psaltery and timbrel, are beyond compare; and, co-extensive with the universe, his wisdom sees its utmost bounds. He made the heavens, and so the heavens must laud his majesty. He made the earth, and so should all the earth rejoice and praise Him. He showers his blessings on the righteous; falsifies the expectations of the wicked. Yet He is merciful as well as just; and if He frowns 'tis for a moment, and for Man's well-being; whilst the humble penitent is sure of his forgiveness. Angels in heaven obey and worship Him, but the evil Spirit still defies his government.

This is the God before whom Job repined; whose praises David sang; whom kings adored, and prophets; the God of Israel in the height of her prosperity.

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IV.

GOD THE FATHER OF MANKIND.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—MATTHEW, chap. v., v. 48.

THE views of the Deity as He is depicted by the later Hebrew prophets, the God of John the Baptist, and the God and Father of Jesus, merge so gradually into one another that the beholder, if he entertains no theological apprehensions and is not imbued with any particular dogma or system of salvation, sees but one picture of the Divinity under slightly varying aspects. For to him it matters but little whether the recorded words are those of Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Jeremiah, of John the Baptist, or of Jesus Christ, so long as the sense remains identical:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. . . . .

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. . . . .

Wherefore spend ye money for that which is not bread? . . .

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth. . . . Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . .

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you. . . . .

I am that bread of life. . . . .

It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

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Or again:

> "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions. . .
>
> Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why would ye die, O Israel? For I have no pleasure in the deathof him that dieth, saith the Lord God. . . . .
>
> In those days came John the Baptist preaching and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . .
>
> I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

The description of the Almighty, and of His spiritual heaven, the belief in an immortal state, the call to instant repentance, the warning and denunciation of formalists and hypocrites, these are all couched in expressions which vary but slightly in the utterances of the later prophets and of Jesus of Nazareth; but he it was who brought to a focus all the paternal care and solicitude, and the ineffable holiness, grace, and condescension of the Deity, without sacrificing any of his goodness, power, or wisdom. For the completion therefore of our picture of the Lord God of the Hebrews, henceforward the Father of mankind, as well as in justice to those who preceded the great Teacher, we shall continue to extract the traits illustrative of his nature and government, indiscriminately from the later prophets and from the four Gospels.* There God is the one, sole, self-existent Deity, without peer, and without any rival entitled to obedience; all angels, men, and creatures are subservient

* In these, as well as in all the other extracts which follow, little regard is paid to their chronological order; and the sayings of Christ and of the later prophets are employed as they seem best adapted for continuity of illustration.

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to his heavenly will; as all are dependent upon his divine Providence:

"The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king. . . . .

The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens. But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God and an everlasting king. . . . .

Get thee hence, Satan; thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, him only shalt thou serve. . . . .

Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . . .

There is none good but one, that is God. . . . .

Glorify your Father which is in heaven. . . . .

O righteous Father, the world has not known thee. . . . .

My Father is greater than I. . . . .

I speak not of myself but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. . . . .

. . . . I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment even so do I. . . . .

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. . . .

Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. . . .

Behold the fowls of the air . . . your heavenly Father feedeth them. . . . .

Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field . . . . shall he not clothe you. . . . .

Give us this day our daily bread. . . . .

Forgive us our sins. . . . .

God is a spirit, they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. . . . .

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . .

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

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This is the spiritual God and Father, above all, in all, and through all. He shows special favour to the meek, the sorrowful, and the oppressed:

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive . . . to comfort all that mourn . . . to give unto them the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. . . . .

Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, seek righteousness, seek meekness. . . . .

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly. . . . .

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . .

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. . . . .

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . .

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. . . .

Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. . . . .

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* . . .

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . .

Whoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The will of the Almighty in regard to men is that they should repent of their sins, draw near to, and imitate Him; that they should be spiritual and not carnal, and towards

* Some sayings identical with these are found even in the earlier books: "But the meek shall inherit the earth."—Psalm xxxvii., v. 11.

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this end He is ever ready to extend aid and forgiveness. Some of the illustrations which follow have already been given, but they will bear repetition:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, for he (God) will abundantly pardon. . . . .

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. . . . .

Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. . . . .

Cast away from you all your transgressions . . . and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why would ye die, O house of Israel? . . . .

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye now from your evil ways. . . . .

Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . .

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live? . . . .

I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. . . . .

Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. . . . .

It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. . . . .

Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. . . . .

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. . . . .

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. . . .

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? . .

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Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. . . . .

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." . . . .

In addition to continued watchfulness over their own conduct, and remembrance of Himself, God demands of men a life of self-denial and of active benevolence:

"Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. . . . .

Lead us not into temptation. . . . .

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. . . . .

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. . . . .

Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters. . . . .

Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. . . . .

Ye shall know them by their fruits . . . every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. . . . .

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. . . . .

Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

The picture ceases entirely to be that of a stern, vindictive Judge, and long and patient forbearance in the Father is held up as an example to be followed by men in their dealings with each other. Instead of taking vengeance upon offending towns, destroying men, women, children, and cattle, and even punishing those who fail to do His cruel will, as he is represented in the earlier period of the Jewish history, we now find God merciful to erring nations, and displeased with those who counsel severity. Human

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intercession and priestly atonement are no longer needed to assuage His wrath, and it is man, not God who thirsts for vengeance against his enemies:

> "'Arise,' said He to Jonah, 'go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it . . . for their wickedness is come up before me.' . . . .
>
> So Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh . . . and he cried, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.' . . . .
>
> And the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth. . . And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them . . . he did it not. . . . .
>
> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly . . . (he said) 'for I knew thou art a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.' . . Then said the Lord, doest thou well to be angry?" . . . .

And after having punished Jonah for his proposed severity towards the Ninevites, He said:

> "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?"

What a contrast this, with the earlier accounts of God's commands to slay, and spare neither man nor beast! But this attribute of mercy, and the injunction to men to copy it, were most forcibly impressed by the great Teacher, who notwithstanding that he had not come to destroy the law and the prophets, swept away in a few sentences, the whole cruel code of the early Hebrews:

> "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you . . . . .

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That ye resist not evil. . . . .

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. . . . .

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them. . . . .

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

Quitting now the consideration of the nature and attributes of the Father in heaven and of his dealings with his children, we shall do well to inquire how his relations with them are represented to have been established and maintained; and just as we perceive Him to become a more spiritual God as we travel onwards in history, so, too, we find his association with men more metaphysical. And not only do these relations become less corporeal, but at the same time they grow gradually more and more psychically intimate and confidential, until the great Teacher proclaims (in that sentence which in these modern days has been variously construed by men holding different beliefs as to God's nature) that he and his "Father are one." But let us commence with the earlier sages and prophets, and we shall find that in almost every case they considered themselves merely the mouthpieces of the Almighty. To Moses He is represented as saying:

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

David said:

"The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."

To Jeremiah He said:

"Say not, 'I am a child,' and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. . . . .

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Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. . . and said, 'Behold I have put my words in thy mouth.'"

To Isaiah:

"And I have put my words in thy mouth."

Jesus said:

"I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath *taught** me I speak these things."

And to his disciples he said:

"It shall be *given you* in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the *spirit* of your Father which speaketh *in* you."

And at all periods, but more especially in that under our immediate consideration, a belief in the inspiration of wise men was accompanied by a distrust of pretenders: and the identity of tone and sentiment in which they are denounced by the later prophets and Jesus is very remarkable:

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means. . . . .

The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them. . . . .

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? . . . and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity. . . . .

O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. . . .

---

* These words are italicised to show the distinction between the method of communication or inspiration by which Jesus says he received his instructions and his disciples would receive theirs, as compared with what is stated of or by the earlier prophets.

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Her priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things. . . . .

Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood to destroy souls. . . . .

Her judges are ravening wolves. . . . .

Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. . . . .

By sword and famine shall these prophets be consumed. . . .

Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. . . . .

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Coupled with an exalted conception of the spiritual God, and an improved moral and religious code, we find also a heaven, his abode, growing clearer and clearer as we proceed, and a rational view of the hereafter; far more rational indeed than the ideas on that subject which prevail amongst many modern Christians. The intimate association between morality and religion at this stage of the Church's history renders it very difficult for us to interpret such expressions as "the New Jerusalem" and the "Kingdom of Heaven." Sometimes they appear to refer to the reign of truth and goodness on earth, at others to the future state; if we compare such allegories as that of the Vineyard of the Lord (Isaiah v., v. 1) which, according to the best Rabbinical authorities means the relations between the God and the children of Israel on *earth*, with Isaiah lx., vv. 16 and 17; Daniel xii., v. 2, quoted below, and with similar allegories and parables of Christ, which obviously refer to the heaven hereafter, it seems clear that in those

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days, the present and future states were believed to differ, not in kind, but in degree; and that is probably the truth. It is in the description of heaven that the beautiful poetry and imagery of the East shines forth so conspicuously:

> "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt. And they that be wise shall shine in the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. . . .
>
> Do men gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles? . . . .
>
> I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. . . . .
>
> Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. . . . .
>
> The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard," . . . .

and each having done his duty according to his opportunities, the householder gives to all the same remuneration.

> "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods . . . to every man according to his several abilities."

To each of those who had put his money to the best uses he said:

> "Well done thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;"

but to the one who had secreted his money and failed to employ it usefully he said:

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"Thou wicked and slothful servant. . . . .

Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. . . .

And these" (the wicked) "shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Again, the kingdom of heaven is a condition of gradual growth; not as some believe, an ambrosial bath into which the foulest may plunge, and cleanse themselves in an instant from the effects of all their sins. It is:

"Like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that be in the earth, but when it is sown it groweth up and becometh greater than all the herbs."

And it affords occupation for every kind of living soul; for every accomplishment cultivated here below:

"In my Father's house are many mansions," . . . .

where worldly distinctions cease, even the most intimate that appertains to the flesh:

"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

So, when we attempt to trace the conception of the Deity as He is portrayed in the teachings of the later prophets and of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the example of his pure and self-denying life, we find it far more exalted and truly divine than any we have met with in the utterances of the earlier sages; and His purely spiritual nature renders it impossible to regard Him as a corporeal being. We can no longer see God, for we are not "pure in heart"; but we may feel His presence and study His attributes. Let us, however, before passing to more recent, but less noble

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conceptions of the Deity, seek to limn one faint outline of His heavenly Majesty:

He is the sole omnipotent Creator, the Lawgiver, the Judge, the universal King. Heaven is His throne; the earth His footstool. To Him alone is worship due; His very name is Holy. He is the God of Jew and Gentile, the Father of the human race; all human souls belong to Him, the proud and lowly, the rich and poor, captive and free alike:

> "And all creatures are his care,
> Not a bird that cleaves the air
> Falls unnoticed."

Ever active do we find Him, ever blessing; but exacting for Man's welfare a large return for all His gifts so lavishly bestowed. Vice is His great abhorrence, and indolence a curse; but when to those are added false appearance and hypocrisy; when selfish and ambitious men attempt to shroud themselves in mystery beneath a sacred garb, then are the vengeful warnings of Jehovah thundered forth once more with vehemence in human ears. The penalty for blasphemy is increased manifold, and for a brief unhappiness on earth and then annihilation, is substituted the eternal torture of an ever-burning hell.

Still, as a rule, the Deity described by Jesus and the later prophets is benignant as we find Him just. Bearing long with sin and ever leaning to the side of mercy, He who through Christ enjoined forgiveness to our erring and repentant brethren, times without number, surely will extend His leniency to His children. But not alone the Deity it is who claims our adoration, not alone the Father

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who attracts us to His feet; the heaven in which He dwells, whereof the gates stand open to His mortal children, now no longer mortal, this, too, presents a happy and alluring aspect. No sensuous abode as that of Mahomet, with carnal pleasures to beguile an indolent eternity; no grim Walhalla with its fierce mailed heroes, the kind of guardian angels whose tutelage our warriors of to-day appear to recognise and court; no hunting-grounds, the simple redskin's paradise; not any one of these: It is a home "of many mansions," with occupations for each liberated spirit in strict accordance with its powers and capabilities. No men nor women there, but souls with rising powers; no earthly cliques nor castes, but only heavenly distinctions and a joyful service of a perfect God.

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V.

THE TRINITY.

"Jehovah, Father, Spirit, Son,
Mysterious Godhead! Three in One! . . . . .
Three Persons equally Divine,
We magnify and love."—CHURCH PSALTER AND HYMN BOOK.

"All-seeing God! 'tis thine to know
The springs whence wrong opinions flow. . . . .
Who with another's eye can read,
Or worship by another's creed?"—REV. THOS. SCOTT.

IN conformity with the intention already expressed, we will endeavour in our efforts to portray the Trinitarian view of the Deity, to avoid, as much as possible, entering into sectarian controversies, and with that object we shall eschew creeds, catechisms, and professions of faith, and will draw our materials from the sacred hymns of the people. Nor do we intend to confine ourselves to those of any particular Christian denomination, but excluding for the present the Roman Catholics, to whose conception of the Deity it is proposed to devote a separate chapter, we will avail ourselves of the hymns used by the Church of England, the Independents, the Baptists, and even in a few instances by the Unitarians.

Certain broad principles, however, in regard to the worship of the Trinity must be affirmed; and one of those is that although in his confession of faith the Trinitarian

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proclaims his belief in One God only, comprising three co-equal, co-eternal Persons, yet in actual worship he constantly addresses himself to three deities—three Persons—each with his distinctive attributes. And not only can there be no rational idea of the Triune God without this subdivision (for we shall be told that the Trinity is not founded upon "reason"), but no conception whatever can be formed; and certainly any attempted description, however imperfect, of the attributes and nature of the Trinity, must be made from a separate examination of those of the three distinct persons of the Godhead. The second is, that in the worship of the Trinity, although the name of the Father is usually mentioned first, Jesus Christ is the most conspicuous object of adoration. And how can it be otherwise? He is equal in rank with the Father, and yet he is the Mediator through whom alone the Father can be approached or the human soul saved; so, looking at the proneness of the human mind to cling to the nearest object of sympathy and support, it is not to be wondered at, that the largest number of hymns and the greater share of adoration, are addressed to the "Man of Sorrows" who suffered for our sake. And as to the "Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send you in my name," he will be found to occupy a very subordinate position in the Trinity.*

* Reference is made in this chapter to four authorised hymn-books, *viz.*: Baptist Psalms and Hymns—John Haddon, Bouverie Street; Methodist Hymns—Wesleyan Conference Office, 2, Castle Street, City Road; Church Psalter and Hymn Book, by the Rev. W. Mercer, M.A.—Nisbet; Unitarian Hymns, by Rev. James Martineau—Chapman, Strand. The following figures may be interesting as to the relative position held by the Father and the Son

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First, then, let us contemplate the Son, the second Person of the Godhead. He is a Deity who assumed the mortal shape under supernatural circumstances, and out of love for our erring race suffered agonies such as no human being has ever borne before or since. Even to-day his worshippers are held responsible for his torments and his death:

"Oh Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine? . . . .

All hail, incarnate God,
The wondrous things foretold
Of Thee in sacred writ
With joy our eyes behold. . . . .

The meek, the still, the lowly mind
Oh! may I learn from Thee, my God. . . . .

The Immortal hangs his languid brow,
The Almighty faints beneath his load. . . . .

Beneath *my* load he faints and dies.
I filled his soul with pangs unknown,
I caused those mortal groans and cries,
I killed the Father's only Son. . . . .

To heal me Thou hast borne my pain,
To bless me Thou a curse wast made. . . . .

---

in the minds of two important bodies of worshippers. The Baptist collection contains 171 hymns to Christ, 113 to the Almighty, 24 to the Holy Ghost, and 16 to the Trinity. The Unitarian collection contains 190 hymns addressed to God (51 being introductory to worship), and 71 to Christ. In the other collections it is impossible to draw the distinction with anything like accuracy, inasmuch as we frequently find different verses of the same hymn addressed to distinct Persons of the Godhead.

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Come, oh my guilty brethren come,
Groaning beneath your load of sin,
His bleeding heart shall make you room,
His open side shall take you in. . . . .

'Tis done, my God hath died,
My Love is crucified." . . . .

There are various degrees in the exaltation of Jesus, from that which makes him the Creator and Ruler of the universe down to the modified worship of him as the "Son of God" by certain Unitarians:

"The earth could to her centre shake,
Convulsed whilst her Creator died. . . . .

O Christ, our hope, our heart's desire,
Redemption's only spring!
Creator of the world art Thou,
Its Saviour and its King. . . . .

Come see, ye worms, your Maker die,
Was ever grief like His. . . . .

Cry aloud in heavenly lays,
Glory doth to God belong;
God the glorious Saviour praise
All salvation from him came. . . . .

Rejoice, the Saviour reigns,
The God of truth and love! . . . .

Jesus the Saviour reigns,
Let earth adore its Lord. . . . .

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,*
Great David's greater Son.

Great God, whose universal sway *
The known and unknown worlds obey,
Now give the kingdom to Thy Son,
Extend his power, exalt his Throne. . . . .

* These couplets, taken from well-known hymns, are to be found in the Baptist collection, and also in that of the Unitarians.

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Bow thy meek head to mortal pain,*
Then take, O Christ, thy power and reign.

'Tis finished! Son of God, thy power *
Hath triumphed in this mortal hour. . . . .

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun *
Doth his successive journeys run:
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more." . . . .

(In juxtaposition to this verse from one of Watts's hymns to the Son, let us place another by the same author addressed to the Father:

"Far be thy honour spread,
And long thy praise endure,
Till morning light and evening shade
Shall be exchanged no more.") . . . .

God the Son is the type of gentleness and fraternal love; the fount of mercy. He stands betwixt Man and the just wrath of God the Father:

"Thou Lamb of God, thou Prince of peace,
Renew thine image, Lord, in me. . . . .

Lowly and gentle may I be. . . .
No charms but these to thee are dear. . . . .

Jesus' is a gentle mind. . . . .

Jesus' is a loving mind. . . . .

Thy faithfulness, Lord, each moment we find
So true to thy word, so loving and kind:
Thy mercy so tender to all the lost race,
The vilest offender may turn and find grace. . . . .

---

* These are couplets from the Unitarian collection.

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But O! what gentle terms,
What condescending ways,
Doth our Redeemer use
To teach his heavenly grace. . . . .

Our nearest friend, our Brother now
Is He to whom the angels bow. . . . .

God the offended God Most High
Ambassadors to rebels sends,
His messengers His place supply
And Jesus begs us to be friends. . . . .

Thou God that answerest by fire,
On Thee, in Jesus' name, we call." . . . .

His merciful interposition is extended to all who believe in him, no matter how fallen and depraved they may be:

"Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!
He spreads his arms to embrace you all
Sinners alone his grace receive;

No need of him the righteous have,
He came the lost to seek and save. . . . .

Believe and all your sin's forgiven,
Only believe and yours is heaven." . . . .

He reigns in heaven in resplendent glory, and "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead":

"Hosanna to the Prince of light
Who clothed himself in clay. . . . .

Who is the King of glory, who?
The Lord, of boundless power possessed.
The King of saints and angels too,
God over all, for ever blest! . . . .

The Lord shall come, a dreadful form,
With rainbow wreaths and robes of storm
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind. . . . .

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Great God, what do we see and hear?
The end of things created!
The Judge of mankind doth appear,
On clouds of glory seated!"

He is to be loved with all the devotion of which Man is capable; and his love in return is all-sufficing:

"O God, of good the unfathomed sea,
Who would not give his heart to Thee?
Who would not love thee with his might,
O Jesu, Lover of mankind? . . . .

My life, my portion Thou,
Thou all-sufficient art.
My hope, my heavenly treasure now,
Enter and keep my heart. . . . .

O Thou who camest from above
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart,

There let it for thy glory burn
With unextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return
In humble prayer and fervent praise." *

Although the vocabulary of prayer, praise, and adoration, is almost exhausted in the worship of Jesus, much of the same sentiment is addressed to God the Father, who is still distinguished as Jehovah and the Almighty; the name by which He was known in Israel. Some of the hymns

* The Unitarians have adopted the well-known hymn of Wesley, from which these two verses are taken, altering the first line so as to accord with their faith. In their collection it is addressed to God the Father, and reads thus:

"O Thou who deignest from above,
The pure celestial fire to impart."

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specially directed to Him are, however, calculated to convey the idea of His sternness and inexorable justice rather than of His mercy and love:

"Dread Jehovah! God of nations,
From thy temple in the skies,
Hear thy people's supplications
Now for their deliverance rise.

Lo! with deep contrition turning
Humbly at thy feet we bend,
Fasting, praying, weeping, mourning,
Hear us, spare us, and defend. . . . .

O Lord, thy judgments awe the land,
Thy people's eyes are fixed on Thee,
We own thy just uplifted hand
Which thousands cannot, will not see. . . . .

The Lord displeased hath raised his rod. . . . .

Righteous God, whose vengeful phials
All our fears and thoughts exceed. . . . .

Woe to the men on earth who dwell,
Nor dread the Almighty's frown,
When God doth all his wrath reveal
And showers his judgments down! . . . .

His terrors keep the world in awe,
His justice guards his holy law." . . . .

But these are not alone His attributes, and Christians often give utterance to sentiments which show that when they think dispassionately, their worship is drawn, in spite of their sectarian predilections, to a single Person in the land of spirits, who towers high above all conceivable existences:

"Jehovah reigns! His throne is high,
His robes are light and Majesty;
His glory shines with beams so bright,
No mortal can sustain the sight. . . . .

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Thy bountiful care
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light. . . . .

My God in whom are all the springs
Of boundless love and grace unknown . . . . .

God is love, His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss he wakes and woe he lightens,
God is wisdom, God is love."* . . . .

Perhaps the grandest hymn of praise to God, and certainly the one which completely penetrates the heart of the lover of nature, is that of Addison, sung by all Christian denominations alike:

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied sun from day to day
Doth his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth.

Whilst all the stars which round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

---

* This verse is from an Unitarian hymn by Sir John Bowring, adopted by the Baptists and others.

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What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball,
What though no real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found;

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing as they shine,
'The hand which made us is divine.'"

This grand hymn carries the worshipper's thoughts to the utmost visible bounds of Creation and makes nature herself, in her grandest aspects, the exponent of God's infinite majesty without suggesting one pantheistic idea. From end to end it serves as a protest against a demonstrative outward worship; whilst it administers a silent rebuke to those devotees who people the heavens with the material products of their own heated imagination, instead of seeing in the firmament itself, which "showeth His handiwork," the whole field of His endless labour, the length and breadth of His actual dominions.

Other modern hymns speak as eloquently of Man's duty to his Maker, as does this one of God's power in the universe:

"Teach me my God, my King,
Thy will in all to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee. : . . .

All may of thee partake:
Nothing so small can be
But draws when acted for thy sake
Greatness and worth from thee.

If done beneath thy laws,
E'en servile labours shine,
Hallowed is toil if this the cause,
The meanest work divine."

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His steadfast equanimity, too, is vividly portrayed in some of our modern psalms, which it may be remarked, in passing, are often very much under-estimated, and are compared disparagingly with those of the Hebrew prophets. Probably when distance has lent enchantment to the view, our beautiful modern hymns will be better appreciated:

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares,
Whilst thine eternal thought moves on,
Thine undisturbed affairs. . . . .

He knows no shadow of a change,
Nor alters his decrees." . . . .

And occasionally we are shown that even our highest conceptions of the Almighty, as reflected in His works, fail to reach His presence:

"These lower works that swell Thy praise,
High as man's thoughts can tower,
Are but a portion of Thy ways,
The hiding of Thy power." . . . .

But that repentant hearts are capable of feeling that presence:

"O not in circling depth or height,
But in the contrite breast,
Present to faith, though veiled from sight,
There does His spirit rest.
O! come Thou presence Infinite
And make thy creature blest."

If Jesus Christ has been exalted nominally to an equality with God, and as every candid investigator would admit, absorbs a larger share than He does of divine worship, so the Holy Ghost, who is considered the messenger of the

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Father and Son, though theologically equal in every respect to both, attracts but little attention. Indeed the perusal of those hymns, which are specially addressed to him, make it surprising that the equality should be maintained even in theory:

"Enthroned on high, Almighty Lord,
The Holy Ghost send down,
Fulfil in us Thy faithful word,
And all Thy mercies crown. . . . .

Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,
With all Thy quickening powers,
Come shed abroad the Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours. . . . .

Lead us to holiness—the road
That we must take to dwell with God,
Lead us to Christ—the living way,
Nor let us from his pasture stray." . . . .

Thus it would seem that he is the spiritual missionary to spread the knowledge of God's ways and to point out the path to heaven; and however figurative the language, the purport is always the same:

"Descend from Heaven immortal Dove,
Stoop down and take us on thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferior things. . . . .

Oh for a sight, a pleasing sight,
Of our Almighty Father's throne!
There sits our Saviour crowned with light,
Clothed in a body like our own."

Whilst the hymns addressed to the several Persons of the Godhead have, in many instances, the effect (quite legitimate from a Trinitarian point of view) of confound-

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ing their attributes, yet when we come to those which are addressed to the Triune God as One, then we find each Divinity to have his distinctive personalities:

"Maker, Upholder, Ruler! Thee
Let all that live adore. . . . .

Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, and King,
Appointed Judge of all! . . . .

Spirit of Light and Life and Love,
Thy glorious gifts impart. . . . .

Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit, Three,
Let heaven and earth adore."* . . . .

A word in passing as regards the sentiments of a large majority of Trinitarian worshippers concerning creeds at variance with their own. Whilst the Triune God is implored to call into His flock those who of old crucified the Saviour, and who, surrounded and benefited by all the teachings of Christianity, still firmly deny his Godhead, His vengeance is invoked (not always in phraseology fit to be addressed to the Deity) upon the great Arabian

* To those who have been educated in the Trinitarian faith—who accept it without consideration—there need be nothing surprising in this confusion of terms; but a stranger, unacquainted with the views of the large body of Unitarians, would be much astonished to find how closely the language of their worship sometimes approximates to that of the Orthodox. One of their collections of hymns, compiled by the Rev. John Hamilton Thom, contains, amongst the chants, the "Te Deum":

"The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee,
The Father of an Infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true, and only Son,
Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter."

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reformer Mahomet, who led millions from the darkness of idolatry and vice to a knowledge of the true God; and, although not so openly, upon the Unitarians also, whose honour and obedience to Christ, and earnest imitation of his example, have certainly borne as good fruits in society as the worship of the Trinity. The following is an example of the terms in which these sentiments are occasionally expressed:

"We know it must be done,
For God hath spoke the word,
All Israel shall the Saviour own
To their first state restored. . . . .

Send then thy servants forth
To call the Hebrews home,
From east and west, and south and north
Let all the wanderers come. . . . .

The smoke of the infernal cave
Which half the Christian world o'erspread,
Disperse thou heavenly Light, and save
The souls by that Impostor led,
That Arab thief as Satan bold,
Who quite destroy'd thy Asian fold.

O might the blood of sprinkling cry,
For those who spurn the sprinkled blood!
Assert thy glorious Deity,
Stretch out thine arm, thou triune God!
The Unitarian fiend expel
And chase his doctrine back to hell."

In treating of the conception which modern Christians have formed of the future state, it is hardly fair, without a word of reservation, to draw our materials from the sacred songs of the various creeds; for a large proportion undoubtedly regard the expressions they contain as metapho-

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rical. Millions, however, and it may be safely said, all the uneducated, believe in a material heaven, where even now the Father and the Son sit side by side surrounded by winged seraphs and saints, robed in white, chanting melodies expressive of adoration of the Trinity; the gates of which will be opened after the day of judgment to the worshippers themselves in the flesh; and where they will be allowed, as the reward of their faith in God's vicarious sacrifice, to join the heavenly choir, and enjoy everlasting rest and freedom from trial, pain, and sorrow:

"Those amaranthine bowers
(Unalienably ours)
Bloom our infinite reward. . . . .

Purchased by the blood of God. . . . .

I come, thy servant, Lord, replies
I come to meet thee in the skies,
And claim my heavenly rest. . . . .

How happy the people that dwell
Secure in the city above!
No pain the inhabitants feel,
No sorrow or sickness shall prove. . . . .

There's a bright land far away,
Where 'tis never-ending day. . . . .

There's a land we have not seen,
Where the trees are always green. . . . .

For that Heaven so bright and blest
Is our everlasting rest. . . . .

Children's voices high in Heaven
Make sweet music round the Throne. . . . .

Oh, happy land! Oh, happy land!
Where saints and angels dwell;
We long to join that glorious band,
And all their anthems swell!"

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Nor is this language for the multitude merely allegorical. The doctrine of the bodily resurrection, and the coming of Christ in person, preclude such an interpretation of the hymns:

"The great Archangel's trump shall sound. . . . .

Tear up the graves and cleave the ground. . . . .

Sinners shall lift their guilty head
And shrink to see a yawning hell.
But we who now our Lord confess
And faithful to the end endure,
Shall stand in Jesu's righteousness. . . . .

No more we tremble at the grave,
For he who died our souls to save
Will raise our bodies too. . . . .

In this identic body I
With eyes of flesh refined, restored
Shall see that self-same Saviour nigh,
See for myself my smiling Lord. . . . .

Corruption, earth, and worms
Shall but refine this flesh,
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh. . . . .

The flame of angelical love
Is kindled in Jesus's face,
And all the enjoyment above
Consists in the rapturous gaze. . . . .

What a countless company
Stand before yon dazzling throne,
Each before his Saviour stands,
All in milk-white robes arrayed,
Palms they carry in their hands
Crowns of glory on their heads. . . . .

Prostrate on their face, before
God and his Messiah fall.

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They have all their sufferings past,
Hunger now and thirst no more,
No excessive heat they feel
From the sun's directer ray,
In the milder clime they dwell
Region of eternal day."

In these days, when religious persecution, as it was practised in the middle ages, is regarded with equal abhorrence by all denominations of Christians, it is no wonder that hell should be deprived of its corporeal tortures, and that not many should be willing to accept these in their literal interpretation. Still there is a considerable number of worshippers who stand in dread of a somewhat indistinctly defined material hell, which at times assumes the form of complete annihilation, merciful indeed, as compared with the torments of a suffering eternity:

"Terrible thought, shall I alone
Who may be saved, shall I
Of all, alas! whom I have known
Through sin for ever die? . . . .

Shall I, amidst a ghastly band
Dragged to the judgment seat,
Far on the left with horror stand
My fearful doom to meet. . . . .

Will angel bands convey
Their brother to the bar?
Or devils drag my soul away
To meet its sentence there? . . . .

What after death for me remains,
Celestial joy, or hellish pains
To all eternity?"

If the work of sketching the picture of the Deity as it

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was present in the minds of men in ages long gone by, has been undertaken with doubt and hesitation, how much more anxiously must we apply ourselves to the task of delineating Him as He exists in the conception of our friends and kinsmen of to-day. Many there are, to whose minds the summary about to be attempted will be foreign, indeed; thousands who would infinitely prefer the modern Parsee doctrine that there is only One God, the Creator of all things, "who has neither face nor form, colour nor shape, nor fixed place, who has no peer, and is himself such a glory that we cannot praise or describe him, nor our mind comprehend him"—who consider that the whole duty of man is comprised in "pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds"; who believe in "the punishment of vice, the reward of virtue, but in no mediator but the mercy of God."*

But as the preceding illustrations have shown, that is not the popular conception of the God of the universe. To millions of human beings such a theological doctrine would convey no idea or meaning whatever, and those must have a personal friend in heaven, with whose nature they are conversant and whom they are able to approach in the hour of suffering; they need a Ruler and Judge of whom they stand in constant awe; the prospect of a final rest where their highest desires will be attained; and some require a place of physical torture to deter them from committing sins for which human justice fails to provide an adequate punishment. The general impression made upon a reflecting and impartial observer by the picture of the Trinity, is that although it is a relapse from the pure

* 'The Parsee Religion,' by Dadabhai Naoroji.

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monotheism which the great Teacher professed, still it should not be set side by side with the ancient idolatries, and the very horror with which the orthodox view the materialism of certain men of science, or perhaps it would be fairer to say, their proneness to attach the term atheism to any exalted estimate of the natural forces, arises from an apprehension of, and is a protest against a return to that worship of Nature, which, as we have seen, probably preceded the original belief in one spiritual God. The Father and Son as they sit enthroned on high, represent Man's conception of what he himself should be; but whilst a vastly increased proportion of the human race is striving after perfection, as compared with the few who dwelt in Palestine, it is probable that the ideal has degenerated rather than risen since the handful of earnest men who hung upon the words of Jesus of Nazareth, were told by him that they must seek to be perfect even as their "Father in heaven is perfect."

The dual nature of the Godhead (for as we said, the Holy Ghost takes an inferior rank) adapts Him to the great diversity of human wants and thoughts; encouraging appeals for his assistance in all the shifting scenes of life. To the afflicted He appears a bleeding, suffering saint, whose agonies cry shame upon their trivial sorrows. Their grief becomes a blessing when compared with his atoning sacrifice, and any faint resemblance which suggests itself between their case and his, raises their hopes of heaven, calms their fears of future punishment for unrepented sins, and gives reality to faith, till then profession only. The affluent, and those who are at ease, find ready methods of explaining inconvenient references to wealth and poverty; whilst his example causes them to give

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less sparingly than otherwise they might. They see Him throned on high, surrounded by a choir of angels ready to obey his nod; a King, no longer poor, but robed in majesty; and so they hope, by wisely using all the blessings He has showered upon them, to join the heavenly aristocracy. The kings of earth who still regard themselves as crowned by Him, address him as of old. To them he is "the Lord of Hosts," who, visiting their camp, gives victory to their arms; whilst to the gentle lady who perhaps would give her crown and all that she possesses in exchange for that retirement which her meanest subject may enjoy, finds consolation in the thought that in celestial realms she will secure the blessing which his wisdom has denied her in her own dominions.

Associated power and gentleness, justice and mercy, grandeur divine, and human condescension, the Trinity holds out his arms to all believers; is ready to assist the vilest wretch to scale his heaven. But are the terms of pardon those which Jesus stipulated? Must the right hand be severed if it give offence? The eye plucked out for violating chastity? Must worldly goods be sacrificed for heavenly treasures, and death itself be courted, to attain eternal life? No, here it is that human dogma and device step in, to point a royal road to heaven, supplanting the divine commands and gilding present sins with a vicarious atonement, a cruel sacrifice which, over eighteen hundred years ago, a mob of priests and fanatics, under the ægis of the heathen law, sent up to heaven to satisfy the anger of the "jealous God." And what is now demanded of the sinner? True repentance, be it but an hour before eternity, along with a profession of belief in God as three in one and

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one in three, in Christ the only Mediator betwixt God and Man; and then the gates are opened and the angelic choir is there, prepared to welcome the repentant and believing sinner to his home in heaven.

But these conditions not complied with, these preliminaries omitted or rejected, perhaps by one for whose dread crime society is as responsible as the criminal himself; a man, it may be, from whose poor soul "the law" has crushed all human sympathy; or an infanticide whose seducer walks at large, courting and courted by fair and virtuous dames; if such as these refuse to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and his atonement, then even the "gentle Jesus" comes with holy anger to pronounce the sentence of eternal torture, he then is the "jealous God." In the same human form in which he visited the earth of old, he will descend again, but this time robed in white and crowned with glory, preceded by the archangel who, with trumpet sound, will herald Man's approaching doom!

The heaven of the Christian multitude has been described. It is not carnal, though it is decidedly material: eternal songs of praise and thanksgiving are its favourite employments; its chief reward to see the Son and Father face to face. Is this the heaven of Christ; the home of many mansions, where the spirit will expand; the ruler over few, become the ruler over many things; and where the human soul, no longer fettered by the flesh, or tempted by the senses, shall rise and rise, until it reaches nigh to God's perfection? These are the questions every worshipper must answer for himself.

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VI.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIVINITY.

"Oh Majesty most beautiful,
Most Holy Trinity,
On Mary's throne we climb to get
A far-off sight of Thee."

THE CROWN HYMN BOOK (*Roman Catholic*).

IF the preceding sketch of the popular conception of the Trinity be a correct one, then the rationale of the faith in the Triune God would seem to be that men have followed into the mysterious spirit-world the soul of a holy man and highly inspired Teacher, have raised him to a nominal equality with, but really to a rank superior to that of the Father in heaven, the One true and only God; and that under the designation of the Mediator they regard him as exercising the most powerful influence over their temporal and eternal destinies. That influence is, moreover, in theological phrase, "of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding," and constitutes the third Person of the Triune God. Nothing could be more natural than that some of the worshippers holding such a belief should extend the divine attributes of the God-man "of the substance of his mother," to his earthly parent, and should worship her as well as her divine offspring. We shall not stop to discuss the greater or less claim to credibility which the immaculate conception of the Virgin may have as compared with the

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miraculous conception of her great Son, but we think that unprejudiced scientific theologians cannot fail to see in both traditions different phases of the same tendency in the human mind to lay hold upon visible objects of adoration, cherished for their gentleness and sufferings, and gratefully to endow them with divine attributes. But there is another deeply interesting and significant circumstance connected with the worship of the Virgin, to which reference was made in a preceding chapter, and one that has a tendency to enlist for those who have thus raised her to a throne in heaven, the sympathy at least, if not the approval of dispassionate students of theology,. and that is the association of the feminine nature with the human conception of the Divinity, for it seems probable that the practice of what Protestants call mariolatry will, in the future, present to the mind of our race a Deity whose maternal attributes will be reflected in an elevated and refined womanhood on earth. But first we must surmount a not very formidable difficulty in regard to the adoration of the Virgin, which some of our Roman Catholic readers are certain to raise, and that is the question whether or not she is worshipped at all. The honest answer to the question would be, "theoretically perhaps not, but practically, yes." It has been and is constantly and strenuously denied that she is worshipped at all, and one theologian asserts that the Roman Catholics do not "at any time say even so much as one prayer to her." * But the same writer makes but a feeble defence on behalf of

* 'A Papist Misrepresented and Represented,' from the original of the Rev. John Gother; by the Ven. and Right Rev. R. Chaloner, D.D.; London, Richardson: p. 20.

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his co-religionists, for he says elsewhere, "The papist truly represented believes it damnable to think the Virgin Mary *more* powerful in heaven than Christ, or that she can in anything command him." * The negative inference is obvious. What should we think of a Trinitarian who denies that he worships Christ by saying that he believes it damnable to think him more powerful in heaven than his Father, or that he can in any way command Him! It appears to us that the Virgin occupies precisely the same position towards her Son in the Roman Catholic mind, as the Son does towards the Father amongst Protestants, and we have not come to this conclusion without careful inquiry and unbiassed observation. Let us deal with the difficulty precisely as we have dealt with controversial questions in other creeds, not even stopping to inquire whether it is accurate that the Roman Catholic worshipper does not address prayers to the Virgin; and that is by consulting the sacred songs of the people, which form an important element in their daily worship. † This will give us a fair idea not only of the rank which the Virgin holds as compared with the three Persons of the Trinity, but also of the object served by her presence in the minds of worshippers.

* 'A Papist Misrepresented and Represented,' from the original of the Rev. John Gother; by the Ven. and Right Rev. R. Chaloner, D.D.; London, Richardson: p. 20.

† Students of theology who wish fully to investigate the matter should carefully read the work above named by Dr. Chaloner; also the Roman Catholic Catechism published by Richardson, London; and the 'Crown Hymn Book' from which extracts are here made. They should also hear Roman Catholic doctrinal sermons on the subject, look at the position and character of emblems in the churches, and converse with the poorer Roman Catholic laity.

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First, when we consider the terms in which the Virgin is approached, we find that in early childhood worshippers are taught to address to her the same expressions as they address Jesus Christ:*

"Infant Jesus meek and mild,
Look on me a little child,
Pity mine and pity me,
Suffer me to come to thee. . . . .

Maiden Mother meek and mild
Take, Oh take me for thy child,
All my life Oh let it be
My best joy to think of thee." . . . .

Later on in life the hymns sung to her indicate at one time absolute worship, at another they leave it doubtful whether her intercession is not all that is sought for. We will at present take only two illustrations:

"Daily, daily sing to Mary,
Sing my soul her praises due,
All her feasts, her actions worship
With the heart's devotion true. . . . .

Thus sweet Mother day and night
Thou shalt guide my steps aright,
And my dying words shall be,
Virgin Mother, pray for me." . . . .

Sometimes the song suggests an association between the Virgin and the Trinity, making them indissolubly four in one:

"Oh, by that Almighty Maker
Whom thyself a virgin bore,
Oh, by the Supreme Creator
Linked with thee for evermore." . . . .

* All the extracts are from the 'Crown Hymn Book' (Richardson), used by the Roman Catholic body.

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"So worship we God in these rude latter days,
So worship we Jesus our love, when we praise
His wonderful grace in the gifts he gave thee,
The gift of clear shining sweet Star of the Sea."* . . . .

Or she is addressed as the sole mediatrix between God and man:

"But if thou wilt appease Him,
Speak for us, but one word,
Thou only canst obtain us
The pardon of our Lord." . . . .

The Queen of Heaven is her favourite designation with her adorers; and she is regarded as the mother of the human race:

"Look down, O Mother, Mary,
From thy bright throne above
Cast down upon thy children
One only glance of love. . . . .

Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star,
Guide of the wand'rer here below." . . . .

As Queen of Heaven she possesses divine attributes which are vainly sought in any other heavenly being. Combined with the power and providence of a goddess, she is endowed with the brightest virtues and the gentlest graces and sympathies of womankind:

"She is mighty to deliver,
Call her, trust her lovingly;
When the tempest rages round thee
She will calm the troubled sea. . . . .

All our joys do flow from Mary,
All then join her praise to sing. . . . .

* The Virgin is variously addressed as the "Star of the Sea," the "Ocean Star," the "Queen of Heaven," the "Immaculate Mother of God," the "Mother of Mercy," the "Most Holy" (Sanctissima), the "Mystical Rose," &c., &c.

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Trembling sing the Virgin Mother,
Mother of our Lord and King;
While we sing her awful glory,
Far above our fancy's reach,
Let our hearts be quick to offer
Love the heart alone can teach. . . . .

Holy Mary, we implore thee,
By thy purity divine . . . . .

O purest of creatures, sweet mother, sweet maid! . . .

Lady, than all the heavens more high!
More than seraph in purity,
A glance of pity incline. . . . .

Show thyself a mother,
Offer him our sighs,
Who for us incarnate
Did not Thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins,
To thy shelter take us,
Gentlest of the gentle,
Chaste and gentle make us. . . . .

All beautiful thou art, O Mary,
And stain is not in thee.

Mother, beloved, inviolate,
Pray, pray for us."

"Virgin most prudent, Virgin most venerable, Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful. . . Mirror of Justice, Seat of Wisdom, Cause of our Joy, Spiritual vessel, Vessel of singular devotion, Tower of David; . . . Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Comforter of the Afflicted, Help of Christians, Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of All Saints."

The last few lines of prose are extracted from the "Litany of Mary" chanted by Roman Catholics; and a comparison of that with the "Litany of the Saints," and

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the "Litany of Jesus" shows that she ranks high above the Saints, whilst in some instances she appears to be somewhat inferior, in others equal to her Son. A few illustrations must suffice.

From the Litany of Jesus.	From the Litany of Mary.
"Jesus, Mighty God.	"Holy Mother of God.
Jesus, Sun of Justice.	Mirror of Justice.
Jesus, Author of Life.	(No analogous expression.)
Jesus, Lover of Chastity.	Mother most Chaste.
Jesus, our Refuge.	Refuge of Sinners.
Jesus, Strength of Martyrs.	Queen of Martyrs.
Jesus, King of Patriarchs.	Queen of Patriarchs.
Jesus, Light of Confessors.	Queen of Confessors.
Jesus our Way and our Life.	Gate of Heaven.
Jesus, most Powerful."	Virgin most Powerful."

It is quite true that when the Virgin is coupled in prayer with the Father, the Son, and the Trinity, those are asked to have "mercy upon us," whilst the Mother of God is only supplicated to "pray for us," and this would indicate her inferiority, were it not that on the other hand she is often directly appealed to for such support as only a Deity can give—the power to resist sin and temptation, and the grace to lead a holy life. This belief in her divine power becomes unmistakable when we consider the terms in which she is addressed in such petitions, and compare them with similar prayers to the Persons of the Trinity. In the following a few words are italicised for purposes of comparison:

To Mary.

"Teach us, teach us, Holy Mother,
How to conquer every sin,
How to love and help each other,
How the prize of life to win." . . . .

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To God (Lucis Creator).

"Teach us to knock at heaven's high door,
Teach us the prize of life to win,
Teach us all evil to abhor,
And purify ourselves within." . . . .

To Jesus.

"Curb thou for us th' unruly tongue,
Teach us the way of peace to prize,
And close our eyes against the throng
Of earth's absorbing vanities." . . . .

To the Holy Ghost.

"O guide our minds with thy blest light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with thy strength which ne'er decays,
Confirm our mental frame." . . . .

In a similar but somewhat more familiar strain, the Guardian Angel is also appealed to, but clearly as an inferior being to either the Trinity or the Mother:

"Sweet angel of mercy,
By heaven's decree
Benignly appointed
To watch over me. . . . .

Oh cease not to keep me
Blest guide of my youth,
In the ways of religion,
And virtue and truth."

The best evidence, however, of the rank held by Mary in heaven is found in the hymns of devotion to the Church:

"I'll never forsake thee, I never will be,
O Church of the Saints, an apostate to thee.

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I may lose some advantage and forfeit some gain,
I may meet with unkindness and suffer some pain,
But Jesus and Mary will surely bestow
Richer gifts than from sin and apostasy flow. . . . .

Then we'll cling to the Priest, and we'll cling to the Pope,
We'll cling to Christ's Vicar, for Christ is our hope;
We'll fight a good battle, and Mary the while,
From her throne in the skies on her children will smile."

In one of these hymns the approval of the Father is also courted, or rather the verse may be so construed as it expresses a *fear* of the Deity (the reference is still to apostasy):

"O far from me such wickedness,
One treasure I hold dear—
My Holy Faith. I fear not men,
'Tis only God I fear.

I love his Altar, where I kneel
My Jesus to adore:
I love my Mother, Mary dear,
O may I love them more."

At the end of the collection of hymns from which all these extracts have been made, are to be found certain "Divine Praises," which serve to fix the rank of the Mother of God in heaven:

"Blessed be God.
Blessed be His holy name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, the most holy Mary.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be God *in* his Angels and *in* his Saints."

No mention whatever is made of the third Person of the Trinity.

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The Roman Catholic conceptions of Heaven, and of Purgatory or Limbo, are too well known to need much comment. One or two extracts may however be useful to enable us to complete our sketch. Death is depicted as an event to be dreaded:

"Vainly strives imagination
That dread moment to pourtray
When the soul, her course completed,
Soon to quit her home of clay,
Fiercely wrestles might and main
With her yielding fleshly chain." . . . .

Christ is then appealed to for protection from Satan:

"Scatter all his host infernal,
Lay me fast in Thee asleep,
Then to fields of life eternal
Bear me, Shepherd of the Sheep,
There to dwell in sight of Thee,
Safe for all eternity."

Fortunate is the man who has the last sacred offices performed for him:

"And shall it be my lot
Prepared by sacraments to die?
Or shall I perish in some lonely spot
No Priest of Jesus nigh?"

But unhappy he who dies in sin:

"Ah! 'tis impossible, I know,
Future and past to sever;
Whate'er was found at death,
The same is thine for ever." * . . . .

* This doctrine is certainly inconsistent with that of Purgatory.

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All must suffer after life, but the flames are not eternal. They are expiatory and corrective. The Virgin is thus appealed to:

"O turn to Jesus, Mother! turn
And call Him by his tenderest names,
Pray for the Holy Souls that burn
This hour amid the cleansing flames. . . . .

They are the children of thy tears,
Then hasten, Mother, to their aid;
In pity think each hour appears
An age, while glory is delayed.

See how they bound amid their fires,
While pain and love their spirits fill,
Then with self-crucified desires
Utter sweet murmurs and lie still. . . . .

O Mary! let thy Son no more
His lingering spouses thus expect;
God's children to their God restore
And to the Spirit, His Elect."

And yet, strangely enough, a life wasted in sin, in which

"We gave away Jesus and God,
We gave away Mary and Grace,
Prayer and confession and mass," . . . .

is thus to be atoned for:

"Oh yes! we have got but to send
One word and one sigh up to heaven;
The evil will all be undone,
And the past be completely forgiven."

In the main, however, the faith of the Roman Catholic differs but little in this respect from that of other Christian denominations:

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"Now the written book appears
Which the faithful record bears,
Whence the world its sentence hears
When the Judge assumes the Throne,
Every hidden thought is known.
Unavenged sins are none."

God is appealed to, to save the sinner from "flames that never die"; and, says the petitioner,

"When at last thy righteous ire
Binds the damned in chains of fire,
Call me to Thy chosen choir."

The choir which stands

"Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.

O Paradise! O Paradise!
Who doth not crave for rest. . . . .

Patience, I almost think I hear
Faint fragments of thy song!"

We have already been led, by the distinctive peculiarities of the Roman Catholic faith, to criticise it more freely than that of any other sect of Christians, and incidentally to draw marked attention to some of its apparent errors. It must be recognised, however, that a belief which has maintained its hold upon the hearts and minds of a large portion of the human race for centuries, claiming indeed to be *the* Catholic faith, and the disciples of which have accomplished, and are still doing so much to improve and save the most abject human beings whom other creeds have failed to reach; it must be admitted, we say, to be in one sense at least a

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divine institution, whatever may be its inherent imperfections and its human ingredients; and that faith reveals to us a heaven in which along with the Triune God, though perhaps not occupying so high a place, a woman sits enthroned. Most candid inquirers will admit that to the multitude she is a true goddess, and is by them devoutly worshipped; we think, too, that many of the higher order of Roman Catholics regard her in the light of a Divinity who typifies the highest female virtues.

Sometimes she is a beauteous Virgin, nursing in her lap the holy Infant-God, and so she is the tutelary Deity of infants and of women labouring with child. Now, as a gentle woman she is pleading with her glorious Son for fallen man; and thus she must assume to many humble Catholics the office held by Jesus in the views of cultivated Protestants. As Queen of Heaven, again, her "awful glory" far transcends all human apprehension. She then exacts love, constancy, and trust; dispenses joys; and her approving smile, with that of Jesus, constitutes the highest bliss. As "Ocean Star" she sheds the light of wisdom on the acts and thoughts of men, shields them against temptation, warns the sinner, and at length guides all her children to the heavenly abode. Even hell must feel her influence, for through her kindly intercession torture is remitted, or is borne with resignation while it lasts.

Yet, whilst the Mother and the Son engross so large a share of Roman Catholic devotion, the pæons to the Father, too, ascend from earth to heaven. The grandest melodies are chanted in his service. No sweeter harmonies proceed from human choir than those which swell in honour of His Majesty from Catholic assemblages. Enthroned on

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high He sits, "*Creator Lucis*," side by side with the Redeemer. "No earthly Father loves like Thee!" his worshippers exclaim, and vain would be their efforts even to catch a glimpse of His abode, if "Mary's Throne" were not provided as a stepping-stone. Would that the altars, and the images, the crosses, incense, candles, were removed; He has no need of those, nor should the worshipper require material emblems to remind him of a Spiritual Father.

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VII.

REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL PICTURES OF THE DEITY.

However men may differ in creed or doctrine, there are certain leading principles upon which all must be agreed. No one will deny that the end and aim of all religious teaching should be to reveal the Deity, so far as the human mind can comprehend him, as He actually exists in the universe, and to fit men for a wise and perfect service of him here, so that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The large majority of orthodox worshippers, too, and all rational students of the history and traditions of the past, will agree in thinking that whilst there have been fluctuations of faith, progression and retrogression, just as in the rise and fall of states and empires, yet on the whole, the advance made in religious truth has been slow and steady; and as the political world has marched onwards and continues to approach the goal of politics, the perfection of the secular state, so too, the theological world is coming nearer and nearer to a knowledge of the one true and only God, and of his divine government.

If these principles be sound, we should expect to find, as we have found in past history, that the conception of the Deity has become more exalted as the human mind became more highly educated. Whilst the barbarous and ignorant depicted to themselves a demi-God who was subject to human passions, and whose supposed weaknesses formed the bond of union with his people, whereas his power rather tended to repel them, and necessitated the intervention of

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human agencies, so we find that with improved morals, the Deity became at once more spiritual and more intimate in his relations with our race, until at length the alliance was formed between spiritually-minded men and a spiritual Father in heaven. And as a necessary consequence we find also a belief in man's immortal state, and in an immaterial heaven, to have become prevalent. Let us then once more glance at the historic record upon which our spiritual experience has been to a large extent based.

Our survey has been restricted to one of the branches of that stream of thought known as the monotheistic theology, although that conception of Him has often bordered closely upon the polytheistic view, and perhaps never more so than at the present time. First we found the Deity depicted as the God of nature and of the human soul, presenting many aspects, which caused his worshippers to address him by various names, whilst at the same time they proclaimed his Unity. He was an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God, a bountiful and sympathetic Ruler, a fierce and jealous Warrior-king, and a terrible, but still a just and merciful Judge. His heaven, which was synonymous with the skies and was hidden from human gaze, was the vast palace of the universe in which he sat enthroned, surrounded by a divine court of warriors and chiefs.

The next glimpse we obtain of Him, although nominally monotheistic, for it reveals him as one divine Person capable of assuming the flesh if not always clothed in it, was in reality not so elevated as the multiform Vedic God, for by the early Hebrews he was accredited (if the term be not a misnomer) with the most violent human passions

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and desires. As these two early conceptions of him were entertained by two peoples living widely apart, and at still undetermined periods of human history, it is impossible to say what relations (if any) those two ideals may have borne to one another. Certain it is, that in the early Semitic conceptions of the Deity he is regarded as one jealous, fear-inspiring God, the King over all Gods, tolerating no rival, and fiercely vindicating his superiority and his claims to the implicit obedience of his "chosen people." As the Lord of Nature he is represented as wielding her powers exclusively for the reward or punishment of the human race, and so completely has this doctrine secured its hold upon the human mind, that we find it perpetuated not only throughout the Hebrew records, but even in its integrity amongst the orthodox of our own day. In times of drought prayers are addressed to the Almighty, that "in this our necessity," He will send "such moderate rain and showers that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort." When the rain with which He has blessed the earth has, in the opinion of his worshippers, exceeded that "moderation" which would have met their wants and wishes, then a new prayer is sent up to heaven and He is implored that, "although we for our iniquities have worthily deserved a plague of rain and waters," He will send fair weather. Or He is petitioned, at another time, that dearth and famine may through his goodness "be turned into cheapness and plenty." And finally when the affliction is contagious disease, the belief in its immediate efficacy as a reforming agency and a reminder of the existence of the Deity, is assuming a most remarkable aspect. For whilst we have a certain section of the community apparently including

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persons of every shade of religious belief agitating to prevent the arrest of certain diseases, on the ground that they are intended by Providence as a warning against vice, another section of the community, nay it may be some of those who argue as just stated, join in sending up to Heaven their thanksgivings that, whilst they acknowledge the justice of the punishments which "by reason of our hardness of heart" *might* have fallen upon us, yet that it has pleased Him "upon our weak and unworthy humiliation, to assuage the contagious sickness wherewith we lately have been sore afflicted and to restore the voice of joy and health in our dwellings."*

Although this is not the place to discuss such a subject, and the belief is only referred to in order to indicate its origin, yet it may be mentioned that the wide divergences of opinion existing even amongst the orthodox, will no doubt ere long lead to a better comprehension of the ways of Providence, and to a proper sense of the importance of co-operating with Him in the execution of nature's laws.

To return to the early conceptions of Jehovah. We found him described then as He is now, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Battles; but this picture of him soon gave place to a nobler one, and when next we see him He is the Holy One of Israel, no longer delighting in sacrifices and burnt offerings, no longer a stern patriarch, but a pastor and a guardian of his people. Added to his ancient attributes of omnipotence and omniscience, we find holiness, wisdom, and mercy. Instead of being clothed in a human form, He is now considered a spiritual God co-extensive with the universe which reflects his Majesty. No longer a King

* It is hardly necessary to state that these extracts are all from the Church of England Book of Common Prayer.

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over all Gods and the dread of his people, He is the sole self-existent Deity; their rock and their stronghold. In our fourth picture, the last trace of a physical being had disappeared, and we found a purely spiritual God, the Father of the human race. Then it was no longer said that no man shall see God and live; but to see Him is the highest human privilege, attainable only by the pure in heart. There He is depicted as the protector of the meek and lowly, the Comforter of the sorrowful, and the Saviour of sinners.

And when we look at society even in our day, we cannot fail to see the need of such a God, for how few are there, who are rulers, chiefs, and shining lights amongst men? How many drudge patiently and enduringly on the earth, alas! how many under the earth's surface, for the public weal? They it is who have the greatest need of a Comforter, and of a home of many mansions. And again, how many poor sinners are there cast off by the world, who are pointed at as Satan's brood, by the righteous overmuch; by the very men who offer an arm to the rich and successful sinner, provided they are allowed to participate in his gains, without being partners in his iniquity. Those whom society has rejected, have most need of a merciful reforming Deity.

With the physical conception of God, the sensate association with him terminates. In the early Semitic age He was believed to be always talking with men, and performing miracles. Later on, whilst He was still represented as authorising men to perform miracles, his oral converse with them had ceased. To-day miracles are regarded as priestly jugglery, and a man who declared that the Almighty had talked with him, would be considered a fit inmate for a lunatic asylum.

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Again, then, we find in our fourth picture of him as drawn by the later prophets and by Christ, superadded to his former attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, holiness, wisdom, and mercy, the further qualities of paternal love for our whole race, care and solicitude for all kinds and conditions of men, and for all living beings, and leniency and long forbearance with sinners. At the same time we have a strongly-marked disapprobation of all the external and formal manifestations of devotion, which in earlier ages had been regarded as the outward and visible signs of true holiness. His heaven was represented as the home of the poor rather than the rich; of the meek before the wise; of the humble in preference to the exalted on earth. So far as the Ideal is concerned, it is hardly conceivable that it can be surpassed, although it is an expansive one, for who can there be higher than a perfect God, and what state more exalted than that which brings us nigh to God's perfection?

The modern pictures of the Deity which we have been contemplating represent him, one as a Father and a Son united in heaven, the other as a Father, a Mother, and a Son; the latter, adding to His nature the gentlest and most sympathetic feelings of a woman. In both cases the bond of union between heaven and earth is a mysterious Spirit, emblematised by a dove; but in that of the Roman Catholics we find also a number of intermediate agencies, the spirits of departed saints and guardian angels, who, whilst they obey the will of God, still listen to the prayers and aspirations of the human beings confided to their charge.

And so these pictures seem to teach us, that at first God revealed himself to man as a great Power in nature;

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that as men became observant of the vast and diversified operations of the surrounding universe, they endowed *it* with divinity, and in the sun and moon, in stars and clouds, and lightning, in thunder, storm, and hail, they worshipped God. How this belief was supplanted by another in a personal Divinity resembling man, has not been philosophically shown. It may have been, figuratively speaking, by God's own voice appealing to the consciences of men. It may be, that as man's young intellect expanded, the wisest of our race were followed in imagination after death, until the world of spirits became peopled with angelic beings. Then would succeed the belief in God as one who ruled the spirit world as well as the material universe. This is a legitimate subject of study and research for scientific theologians, and the solution of the problem may some day serve as a further stepping-stone to the comprehension of His true nature.* Be that as it may, a belief in a personal Deity did arise in the earliest times, first as a human being of a higher order, accompanied by a faith in many inferior gods, and in evil spirits in rebellion against the Highest.

Later on, it would appear, that as the capacity of man's mind enlarged, he found it possible to believe in a personal God, who was yet spiritual, and whom the heaven of heavens could not contain; and as this contemplation of His infinite Majesty would naturally have a tendency to withdraw men's thoughts from that nearer Providence which watches over earth and earthly things, and to rivet

* The reader is recommended to read the fourth, fifth, and sixth Chapters of Sir John Lubbock's 'Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man' (Longmans), as bearing closely on this subject.

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them upon the distant heavens, so it would be necessary that they should be reminded once more of His intimate relations with our race.

This we have seen was brought about by Christ and his immediate predecessors, who divested God of all material attributes, proclaimed the Spiritual Father, to be worshipped, imitated, and beloved with all our soul, and served with all our strength. They, too, taught of man's immortality, and of the kingdom of heaven on earth, preparatory to the heavenly state hereafter, open to all alike, to Jew and Gentile, bond and free.

Subsequent pictures of Him, those which exist in our time, show that the human mind has once more deified the men whom He has honoured as the missionaries of his truth. Some, on the other hand, called materialists, seek to invest the universe itself with reasoning faculties, as we shall find when Nature forms the subject of our study, for the revelation of the Deity. Probably the agency which will correct these aberrations of religious vision, the beacon which will once more guide men to a clearer view of God, will be that dreaded "Science," the knowledge of His natural phenomena and laws, the contemplation of creative and sustaining force, wielded by His own hand, guided by His own Will, which we now invite our readers reverently to explore.

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PART II.

SCIENTIFIC TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE DEITY.

But it is a mission which has to be re-fulfilled again and again as human thought changes and human science develops, for if in any age or country the God who seems to be revealed by Nature, seems different from the God who is revealed by the then popular religion, then that God and the religion which tells of that God will gradually cease to be believed in. . . . . For the demands of Reason must be, and ought to be satisfied. . . . .

But that the religious temper of England for the last two or three generations has been unfavourable to a sound and scientific development of natural theology there can be no doubt. We have only, if we need proof, to look at the hymns—many of them very pure, pious, and beautiful—which are used at this day in churches and chapels by persons of every shade of opinion. . . . . There lingers about them a savour of the old monastic theory, that this earth is the devil's planet, fallen, accursed, goblin-haunted, needing to be exorcised at every turn before it is useful or even safe for man.—CANON KINGSLEY.

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VIII.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ORTHODOXY. 2. AUTHORITIES.

THE difficulties in the way of an exposition of the Divine nature derived from the observation of his works are far greater than they would seem to those who have not studied the subject for themselves, inasmuch as there are grave moral as well as intellectual obstacles to be surmounted. A great many orthodox believers will tell us that it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of the Deity in the universe, whilst others again maintain that the evidences of design are so overwhelming as to preclude any doubt on the subject. Strangely enough, both of these parties exact proofs from the scientific observer, which they would never think of requiring at the hands of those who base their faith on revelation; and both treat with ridicule and contempt any scientific hypothesis or theory which is not irrefutably proved by facts, whilst with the utmost complacency they will expect the scientific observer to give credence to recorded natural events totally at variance with all human experience, when they are required as the foundation or in support of some theological doctrine. The natural theologist, then, must explain everything, and must therefore be well read in physical science; but the course of study and observation requisite for the attainment of even a superficial knowledge of the laws and phenomena of the universe has a tendency to withdraw the thoughts from

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metaphysical considerations, and to give a materialistic turn to the mind of the student, just as the opposite course of study —that of doctrinal theology—often creates a disinclination and a disability for scientific observation and research.

The risk of contracting such a one-sided habit of thought is less where the whole circle of the sciences has been studied than where the attention has been directed to one branch only: but who is there that is able, even in this infant stage of scientific history, to bring under intelligent review every realm of nature? Assuming, however, that the student is tolerably well acquainted with the necessary data for the foundation of his argument, when he makes the attempt to expound his views, he finds himself isolated from the mass of thinkers and readers; for not alone is physical science still very young, but it is somewhat conceited, and its votaries have invented a phraseology to distinguish themselves from the vulgar throng; so in science, as in law, medicine, and for that matter in theology also, the soundness of a man's doctrine is often measured as much by the words he employs as by his facts and logic. First, therefore, the natural theologist has to learn what satisfies himself, then he must convince others, often very unwilling to believe, in a manner suited to their capacity.

In the second place (or perhaps the order of reasoning should have been reversed), the mind of the student himself should be free from any bias calculated to warp his judgment; for however talented he may be, however persevering and industrious in the accumulation of facts, and conscientious in the determination of laws; the moment those clash with the theological prejudices of his youth

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or manhood, orthodox or otherwise, that moment they lose much of their metaphysical value. To such a man, science and theology never can harmonise, though he may endeavour to discover the correct relations between them; and too frequently, indeed, such an attempted concordance militates more seriously against the progress of truth, than the direct attacks of either side, upon the opposite system of theology. Again, whilst the present state of feeling obtains against "rationalists," a large amount of moral courage is needed in anyone who ventures to come boldly forward and maintain the immutability of natural laws. What may be said privately in conversation, and is often listened to with an earnest desire for instruction, cannot so safely be published without the risk of that modern phase of persecution, social ostracism. That risk is, however, diminishing daily, and it would be as unjust as offensive to the great mass of intelligent readers, to deny that the form of cowardice is fast dying out which makes a man conceal his desire to learn, or assume an attitude of offence against one who honestly differs from him in theology, lest he should himself be suspected of infidelity.

The form which a private controversy on the subject of science and revelation usually assumes is this: The outspoken natural or rational theologist will avow his disbelief in the infraction of the laws of nature to satisfy the supposed requirements of any man, age, or people. He will say that the equilibrium of the universe is so perfect, and that all its forces are so intimately correlated, that the minutest reversal of any one of its recognised laws would inevitably disturb the whole fabric: That it is, in his view, absurd to suppose that it should be necessary for the Almighty thus

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to interfere with his established order of things, for the purposes of religious or moral instruction and reform, the more so, as it is a familiar truth that He may and does appeal direct to the consciences of men; whilst in his wisdom He continually employs ordinary physical means to enforce obedience to moral laws without any disturbance in the regular sequence of cause and effect.

The reply of a temperate orthodox reasoner, to such a profession of faith, or scepticism, whichever we like to term it, is usually twofold. First, that the laws of God in nature are as yet but little known, and that when they come to be fully understood, the contradictions between revelation and science will disappear (that means, of course, disappear in favour of orthodoxy), for that the Almighty cannot possibly contradict himself. Secondly, that as revelation has regenerated the human race, and brought man nearer to God, whilst science has as yet done nothing for religion, but has sought to discredit revelation, the teachings of science should be received with the utmost suspicion, and certainly not with the same trust and confidence as the revealed Word of God. Very often the discussion ends here, or the gordian knot is cut by an emphatic profession of faith on the part of the orthodox, that even the most extravagant story is entitled to acceptance if its truth be vouched by Scripture, whilst the most indisputable scientific theory deserves not a moment's consideration, if opposed to the revealed Word.

Sometimes, however, the argument advances a stage farther; and the first statement, that science is still in its infancy, and that when the laws of nature are better understood they will be found not to conflict with, but to

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support revelation, is met by the opposing circumstance that scientific experience is every day cutting the ground foot by foot from under those who maintain the accuracy of events in natural history as recorded in Scripture, which would not be credited by any person of sound mind if they had been described elsewhere. And as to revelation having regenerated Man, that is to say in the sense in which it is regarded by the rationalist, namely, the direct association between the Divine and human mind, he will not only concur in the doctrine, but will probably say that it falls far short of the truth, and that the dictates of common sense, the study of past history, and the observation of society as it exists to-day, all go to prove that the holy spirit of God is entering more and more largely into the human race, notwithstanding the orthodox theory of Man's fallen condition. And the rationalist may perhaps carry the war into the enemy's country, and end the debate by saying that if on his part the orthodox theologian is shocked to find his cherished views of the Deity which have brought Him down in the body to his own level and allowed of oral converse between Man and the Most High attacked by scientific men; so these, who claim to be as much the children of God as the "true believers," are equally scandalised to find that in an age which calls itself intellectual as well as spiritual, the masses should still cling to the old materialistic views of the Deity, inculcated at a period when men could understand those things alone which were impressed upon their organs of sense, and would only obey moral and religious commands when they were rigidly enforced by the sternest physical measures.

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Now, this is really the attitude assumed by the respective parties to the controversy, and if the reader will divest himself for a moment of any doctrinal views which he may entertain on the subject, it will be obvious to him, that before there can be a chance of "reconciliation," one or other of the disputants must give way, and that the concession must be the result of reason, and not of emotion. Be that as it may, it is the bounden duty of the expositor of science to refrain from glossing over what appears to him to be the truth; and if free from the prejudices or apprehensions of doctrinal theology, he is bound to state that no amount of recorded human testimony, especially such as has been transmitted from a barbaric age, can overthrow the evidence of his senses or interfere with the logical inferences to be drawn from the careful observation of natural phenomena.

To qualify such a statement, to conceal the truth, or to attempt a reconciliation between what appears true and false, merely to escape obloquy, is as vain as it is dishonest. But there is another consideration, which may be justly reckoned amongst the difficulties of the student and expounder of the laws of God in nature, and that is the necessity to avoid the useless infliction of pain upon others, of giving unnecessary shocks to the feelings of conscientious worshippers. If there be one circumstance more than any other which makes dissimulation venial on the part of an author, it is the fear that in seeking to reform he should merely succeed in prematurely destroying; or lest, measuring the feelings of those who have never passed the limits of emotional religion by his own thoughts, accustomed, it may be, to deal too familiarly with sacred subjects,

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he should simply shock the religious sense which it has been his object to elevate and refine.

Now, in reference to these difficulties, the author does not hesitate to avow that the chief drawbacks to the performance of his task are his imperfect acquaintance with the circle of the sciences, and his great reluctance to wound the susceptibilities of those whose religion, though it may appear to him to be a strange combination of truth and error, prompts them continually to perform acts of self-denying charity and devotion, and for whom therefore he entertains sincere respect. But fortunately the object of the following chapters is constructive or synthetical rather than analytical or destructive; and whilst the metaphysical views of scientific writers will be very freely criticised, more especially those which have a materialistic bearing, it will be left as much as possible to the conscience of the "orthodox" reader, to compare his own theological tenets with such scientific information and inductions as appear to the author worthy of his notice and acceptance.

It has been not unfrequently said by modern investigators that science recognises no authority, but requires a rigid proof of all her doctrines. In regard to new theories, this statement must be accepted literally; but it means further that the recognised principles of science are liable to correction, and a scientific man who refuses to adopt a new theory simply because an old doctrine with which it conflicts was promulgated by a high scientific authority of the past, would be considered an unsafe guide, not only in regard to that particular subject or theory, but in all that he ventured to publish as the fruits of original

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research. But this exposition of scientific methods of study must not be regarded as of universal application, for science has as much need of authorities, and those are as industriously consulted, as in religion and law. There is however this difference between the two former, science and doctrinal theology, that whilst in the latter much is accepted without inquiry, merely because the authority by whom it was promulgated holds or has held a high position in the Church, regard is had, in the case of science, solely to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the teacher's experiences. To put the case practically, an erroneous doctrine propounded by Luther or Calvin would be accepted and perpetuated for ages, whilst the errors of an Owen or a Darwin would barely endure for a decade or for a year.

But if scientific authorities have to be consulted on what may be termed purely secular matters, in the determination of natural phenomena, how much more necessary is it to have recourse to them in the metaphysical interpretation of those phenomena? For there we require the *opinions* of scientific writers as well as the record of their investigations, and we have to study as a whole the various impressions made by the same natural operation upon differing minds. So that in generalisation and in tracing the connection between visible effect and invisible cause, we have need of the utmost discrimination in the selection of our scientific guides. And again, if scientific theories are liable to correction and even abrogation, the metaphysical views which are based upon them must always be advanced with diffidence and caution. Did we understand fully all the laws and visible phenomena of the universe, we should doubtless have acquired a far more accurate

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conception of the Creator and of his providential acts than we at present possess, and whilst the prospect of forming a nearer acquaintance with his ends in Creation ought to be, much more frequently than it is, the highest incentive to scientific observation and research, we should be very careful in generalising from our restricted survey of nature, not to propound any doctrine which may hereafter prove fallacious, and so not only discredit natural theology, but impede the systematic study of the science of religion.

Our aim, then, in the following chapters will be to avail ourselves of the published opinions of some of the scientific authorities who, as such, have obtained the confidence of the scientific world, and without excluding the results of personal observation and reflection, to attempt to show that there is a view of the Deity to be obtained from the contemplation of nature, as real and as edifying as that which has been handed down to us by tradition, or as we find impressed upon the tablets of the conscience. But before proceeding to the execution of our task, let us, as concisely as may be, refer to the changes of opinion that have recently taken place concerning the proofs of God's existence in nature; for we shall have to deal with those in various portions of our argument.

Formerly the existence of God in the universe was sought in the evidences of design, which were believed to be apparent in the structure of natural objects, or in the adaptation of means to ends; those it was thought conclusively established the immediate presence and constant supervision of a designing Mind.

As the knowledge of natural laws and phenomena ex-

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tended, it was found that whilst many of the latter, of which the purposes were obvious, were the necessary results of previous natural operations, and whilst others appeared to subserve no utilitarian ends, it was becoming every day more apparent that the universe is self-adjusting, so to speak, and contains within itself all the elements and conditions necessary for the maintenance of order, and for purposes of development; and so there sprang up a small section of thinkers, who, as a celebrated French astronomer is reported to have said, "could see no necessity for the hypothesis of a God."

A still further extension of scientific knowledge, however, has led some of our ablest observers to the conclusion that although the adjustment of the mechanism of the universe is so perfect as not to necessitate the immediate interposition of a superintending Mind for the maintenance of order, yet there is such an obvious purpose and usefulness in the vast aggregate of phenomena, past and present, that it is impossible to exclude from view a Mind somewhat resembling ours, but of a much higher standard, in nature. And they attempt to reconcile the self-acting mechanism of the universe, with the existence of a Deity by an appeal to Man's inferiority as compared with the Divine Majesty, somewhat after this fashion: "Can you suppose it necessary," they say, "that He should have to interfere in every little act of nature, as we are compelled to do before we can bring a work of art to completion? No, it is a much nobler view of Him to suppose that He impressed his laws upon matter from the beginning, and that all goes on smoothly for ever." And when they come to consider the perplexing problem of life

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they employ a similar phraseology, modified however to meet the necessities of the case, and they say, "there is a grandeur in this view of life with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms, or into one, and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, have been, and are being evolved."*

It is not our intention here to discuss the merits of these cosmical theories,—for the one which negatives the existence of a Deity can hardly be called a theological doctrine. Criticisms upon them will arise in the course of our argument, and they will be more fully noticed when we come to consider the evidences of design in the universe; but one or two difficulties at once suggest themselves in regard to the last theory. We are led to inquire what essential difference there can be, in the eyes of an evolutionist, between the creation of the lowest types of existence in the beginning, and to-day; and if it was necessary that "life," with "all its powers," should have been originally "breathed" (whatever that may mean) into those forms, what reason is there to doubt the continued inspiration of life into every succeeding one, and into every living thing that comes into existence to-day? Again, if a supernatural influence or in-breathing was requisite to cause the difference between an inorganic crystal and a particle of protoplasm, the basis of organised structures, must not, *a fortiori*, a still higher influence

* It is probably unnecessary to state that these are the concluding lines of Darwin's 'Origin of Species.'

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have been subsequently needed for the creation of a reasoning being?

These are questions, however, to which it will be unnecessary for us to seek replies, inasmuch as we propose to study the Deity in nature for ourselves, and not to deal merely with speculative propositions concerning His existence and providential methods.

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IX.

THE POWER OF GOD IN NATURE.

Physical Force.

"Fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling His word."
Psalm clxviii.

It would be perfectly legitimate if we were to assume the existence of God; and taking as wide a survey of nature as the limited range of our senses, and our restricted knowledge will allow, we might show that in one series of phenomena we have unmistakable evidences of order, beauty, and utility, whilst another set of operations presents indubitable proofs of forethought and design; and it would then be quite logical for us to affirm that the Deity who rules the universe and who has brought it to its present condition, is almighty, omniscient, designing, and perfectly beneficent. For whether, as some believe, his existence was first suggested by the contemplation of the universe, or whether it be that religion has always been an intuitive quality of our race, the fact remains that from the earliest historic period up to the present hour, there has been an increasing conviction in the minds of men that there is a Deity. And not alone have men believed in, but they have appealed to, worshipped, and derived comfort and support from a higher spiritual Being, by whatever name or names He may have been designated. Moreover, every extensive observation of the natural world, every cosmical system that has been propounded, every series of events

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in human history, has led to the same inference; and if here and there a small sect, or even at some particular stage in the world's history vast bodies of men have doubted His existence, as every thinking man is said to do at some period of his life, still it may be safely affirmed that both natural and human history have established the fact that there is a great First Cause, an over-ruling Providence.

It would be, therefore, a species of affectation to profess ourselves capable of entering upon the inquiry before us, with the determination to prove the very existence of the Deity from natural phenomena, without the consciousness that we should be establishing what needs no proof, and demonstrating what is apparent to the humblest intellect. But what we may do is this: We may place before our mind's eye the conception which we have formed of the Power which rules and the Mind that directs the phenomena of nature, and then, turning to our most trustworthy scientific authorities, we may endeavour with their assistance to ascertain how far that view is borne out by the observations of the most skilful experimentalists, and the most unprejudiced and large-minded natural philosophers. Of the systematic reference to authorities we shall have more to say in a future chapter, when we come to treat of the evidences of design in nature; it is only necessary to state that we shall at first avail ourselves of their aid chiefly for the elucidation of physical phenomena. But let it not be forgotten that in this method of inquiry into the nature of the Almighty, compared with the one pursued in the first Part of this little treatise, we labour under the serious disadvantage that whilst the study of religion may be said to have commenced with the birth of Man,

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science is but a child of yesterday; so, all we can hope to do is to designate the direction which should be taken by future students of theological science, and to sketch the merest outline of the great Ruler of nature as He is seen in the visible world.

We believe Him, then, to be an Existence without form or substance, inappreciable to our human senses as a Power, but rendered apparent by His acts in nature.

Here we must stop for the present; and it will be at once obvious that if this view be correct we cannot expect to see God himself in any form of matter. We may learn something, much indeed, concerning His nature, by investigating the "behaviour" of matter, just as we may conclude a man's mental character from the close study of his actions; but as the mere observation of his countenance gives but little indication of the mind beneath, so a merely superficial survey of surrounding nature does little to reveal the character of its Ruler. It is the Mind of God that we seek in all earnestness and humility to approach, and the operation of His Forces that we desire to comprehend.

It would be wasting the time of our readers to enter upon the discussion of the relations between Mind and Matter, or Force and Matter, as it has been hitherto conducted, for it would be possible to lay our hands upon the works of two highly intelligent living naturalists, close observers of the phenomena of life, agreeing upon all essential scientific theories of natural history; and we should find that one of them believes there is no such entity as Force, but that Matter contains within itself the properties necessary for its own government and development, whilst the other absolutely denies the existence of

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Matter altogether, saying that it "is nothing but Force; that Matter, popularly understood, does not exist, and is, in fact, philosophically inconceivable"; * that "when we touch matter, we only experience sensations of resistance," and much more to the same effect.

Setting aside therefore as perplexing and unserviceable the merely speculative views of individuals, who from the observation of one phase of nature propound theories of the universe, we propose to take the opposite course, and to gather into a focus the opinions of some of the leading men who have devoted themselves to the study and personal investigation of various nearly-allied branches of physical science, and who, based upon that experience, have expressed their ideas concerning matter and the forces which it reveals. And here we shall encounter not that conflict of opinion which a diversity of pursuits might have suggested as probable, but an unconscious agreement such as we should sooner have expected to find between students or teachers whose attention had been confined to one and the same series of natural phenomena.

Is or is not Force something distinct from Matter, and if it be so how does it operate in nature? These are the questions to which we must first seek replies in the records of science.

The ancients (it may be remarked in passing) believed matter to possess no qualities whatever, but to have its qualities imparted to it.

To-day it is one of the first principles of physics that: "All forms of matter whether in the atom or in the mass are alike inert and incapable by the exertion of any spon-

* Wallace on 'Natural Selection,' p. 365. Macmillan. 1870.

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taneous force of changing their state or position; wherever a body is placed by any *external cause*, there it must remain for ever unless acted upon by some disturbing force. This property of matter is termed its inertia, or passive resistance to a change of position."*

These statements, the view of the ancient philosophers and that of modern physicists, will be found identical so far as each had the means of observation, for every day it is becoming more and more manifest that all forces are but modes or modifications of what we call "motion." We must, however, not anticipate, but must feel our footing step by step. What is more, as we are dealing with an obscure problem, we must carefully avoid adding to its obscurity by the use of technical phraseology, must employ terms that are simple and well understood; and in taking our first step, must seek to place ourselves upon the firmest possible standpoint.

The very terms inert and inertia show clearly that our conception of matter is, that of itself it is incapable of *motion*. Motion is strictly speaking not a property of matter, any more than rest can be called one of its properties, nor yet is it a force. It is, as we shall find presently, the result rendered conscious to our minds, of force acting upon matter. Sometimes it is called an "affection" of matter; a mode in which matter is affected or acted upon; and the various forces are indicated to us by "the relation of the *affections* of matter to each other and to matter."†

* Brooke's edition (6th) of Golding Bird's 'Natural Philosophy,' p. 145. Churchill.

† Grove, 'On the Correlation of the Physical Forces,' 5th edition, p. 4. Longmans, 1867. In this and other extracts we have italicised what may be termed the operative words in our argument.

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There is no room for misunderstanding what is meant by these expressions. Sir Isaac Newton, a mathematician, physicist, and astronomer, explains his views concerning force and motion with sufficient clearness to be comprehended by a child.

> "A body at rest will continue at rest, and if in motion it will continue to move in a right line with uniform velocity, unless *acted upon* by some *external force*."

Grove, a chemist and physicist, says:

> "The term force, although used in different senses by different authors, in its limited sense may be defined as that which *produces* or *resists motion*."*

Tyndall, a physicist, speaking of vapour, in one of his later essays,† says:

> "The vapour molecules *are kept asunder* by forces which virtually or actually are forces of repulsion."

And again:

> "The molecules do separate from each other when the *external pressure* is lessened or removed, but the atoms do not. The reason of this stability is that two forces, the one attractive and the other repulsive, *are in operation between* every two atoms."

It is obvious that he here conceives of Force as of a living Being pushing two objects asunder, or drawing them together; and elsewhere he says of the force Light:‡

> "It is a train of innumerable waves *excited in*, and propagated through" the hypothetical ether.

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* Grove, 'On the Correlation of the Physical Forces,' 5th edition, p. 16. Longmans, 1867.

† "On Chemical Rays:" 'The Fortnightly,' Feb., 1869, p. 228.

‡ Ibid., p. 229.

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And of chemical force, or chemical activity, he says (same page):

> "I do not think that any really scientific mind at the present day will be disposed to draw a substantial distinction between chemical and mechanical phenomena. They differ from each other as regards the magnitudes of the masses involved, but in this sense the phenomena of astronomy differ also from those of ordinary mechanics."

Sir John Herschel, an astronomer and a physicist,* conceives of Force:

> "As the *originator* of motion in matter, without bodily contact *or the intervention of any intermedium.*"†

The late Dr. William Allen Miller, an eminent chemist, held that there is a *quantity* of force or energy, and says ‡ "that the quantity of force or *energy associated with* matter is *definite* may be illustrated in various ways." He then proceeds to show the "fixity in the proportion of heat which is associated with a given quantity of matter."

Again he says:§

> "But it appears further that there is no such thing as a destruction of energy. The cases in which a superficial examination would lead to the conclusion that force is annihilated show, on closer investigation, that such a supposition is erroneous. The only mode in which we can judge of the *existence* of a force is from the effects which it produces, and of these effects that which is most universal is the power either of *producing* motion, of *arresting* it, or

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* 'On the Origin of Force, Lectures on Scientific Subjects,' p. 467. Strahan.

† Meaning material intermedium.

‡ 'Chemical Physics,' 4th edition, Part I., p. 615. Longmans, 1867.

§ Ibid., p. 616.

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> of *altering* its direction; whatever possesses this *power* has been looked upon as a form of force. *Motion is consequently regarded as the signal of force.* There is no difficulty in showing that gravity, elasticity, cohesion, and adhesion are all forces in the sense of the above definition. But even the more subtle and complex agents, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and chemical action are all capable of *originating motion*, and may be fairly admitted under the definition of *force* above given."

So then, in these well-considered expressions of men of varying minds, all trained to reason inductively from experiments made in their own branches of science, and it would be almost safe to add, from the leading observers of every age, we have the assertion, conscious or unpremeditated,—and all the more valuable to us as evidence where it is unpremeditated,—that matter is one entity; passive, inert, incapable of exertion or spontaneous movement; whilst Force is another entity, active, energetic, measurable, versatile (or "convertible" as it is technically called), indestructible, all-pervading; and although ever associated in our minds with matter, yet that it is something as distinct from it as we can possibly conceive two entities or existences to be distinct from one another. And as the presence of this complex variable Power in nature is shown by science, so far as any fact is demonstrable, to be different from the material universe, we are justified in saying that science supports the first step towards the belief in a non-corporeal, metaphysical existence. It gives reality to what may be called the spiritual hand, which if carefully followed will show us something of the "unknown God" in nature.

Nor is this view confined to the scientific speculator or reasoner; it is held, consciously or otherwise, by men of

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every nation and degree. Not only does the astronomer consider the "*disturbing force*" which warns him of the existence somewhere in the heavens of an undiscovered planet, and the physician or student of living forms speak of the "energy" of life having increased or diminished (for we shall find that vital and physical force are but variations of the same power in nature), but, to conclude with a very homely and popular illustration, if to-morrow one of our readers whilst passing along a public thoroughfare should be killed by the fall of a slate from a roof, the practical jury who would have to pronounce on the cause of his death, the coroner who would preside over them, and the orthodox clergyman who performed the last offices of religion, all would be agreed that the victim of what we call "accident," died "by the hand of God." So far, then, the teachings of science and the enlightened popular theological faith are at one.

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X.

THE POWER OF GOD IN NATURE—*continued.*

VITAL FORCE.

. . . . "that combination of Natural Forces which we call Life."
PROF. HUXLEY.

"The Life of Man essentially consists in the manifestation of Forces of various kinds of which his organism is the instrument."
DR. WM. B. CARPENTER.

THIS is not a treatise on physics or natural history, and we shall not attempt to teach what may be much better learned from the works of our leading writers on these subjects. All we can do here is to re-state in such language as will be comprehensible to non-scientific readers, and in the form best adapted for our argument, a few of the leading facts relative to the modifications of that influence which we may now call the Power of God acting in nature; and more especially its phases which are admittedly linked with one another in an unbroken chain.

If physical force be distinct from and external to matter, it not only operates upon masses, but also upon the minutest particles into which matter is believed to be divisible. When it acts upon and between masses, as for example the celestial bodies, it is known as the attraction of gravitation, or as centrifugal force; when upon smaller masses or upon particles it is called cohesion, aggregation, magnetic attraction, &c. (though the last-named method of Divine action is but little understood). When it agitates molecules of matter causing them to oscillate, or in certain conditions to aggre-

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gate or separate from one another, it is variously known as heat, sound, electricity, actinism, and chemical activity. If the operation of the power known as chemical force, has a tendency to split up already formed substances into their elementary parts, it is called analytical force; but if on the other hand its effect is to build up such substances from the constituent particles, it is called synthetical. And if our authorities concerning the nature of the prime force be correct, then it follows that in whatever quantities, or under whatever circumstance we see, hear, feel, or think of matter, it must necessarily be under the influence of one or other of these phases of force; for the two entities, as we have seen, are always inseparably associated.

Now all the revelations of science, whether they have been made with the microscope, the telescope, or the spectroscope (which has rendered us in some small degree familiar with the physical constitution of the heavenly bodies), or by the unaided sense, or with the help of visible or invisible reagents as in chemistry; all tend to show that not only is physical force all-pervading or omnipresent, but that it acts upon the different forms of matter in an invariable sequence, with unerring certainty, or as it is called "according to law." The order in which the forces operate, or the law which governs their action, will be found to be perfect for the attainment of certain ends, namely, the equilibrium, protection, preservation, and development of the universe; and to advance a step in our argument, for the adaptation of inorganic nature to biological conditions. To speak popularly, the physical forces of the Almighty have fitted and are adapting the unconscious worlds to receive and support organised existences; plants, animals, and the

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highest of all animals, Man, on this earth, and it may be his equivalent or superior in other spheres.

To return to the simplest manifestation of force, motion. The power which propels the cannon-ball through the air was derived from another force which was previously active in the particles of gunpowder, and when the ball is suddenly checked by the target or ship's side against which it is launched, the force does not die, is not annihilated, but entering with inconceivable rapidity into the closely-packed material of the iron-plate, and returning into the substance of the ball itself, it there under the designation of heat causes the particles to oscillate and the whole to glow again, until freeing itself once more, it finds in the external air a less restricted sphere of action. Nor does this ever-active, ever-changing Power in nature confine its operation to inanimate objects, and to the construction and destruction of what we call inorganic substances, but it presents itself to our notice as the quickening agency known as "vital power," or "vitality," which is now recognised by the best scientific authorities, to be only another and a higher modification of physical force.

No new fact in science has been proclaimed amidst such an outcry from pietists as this one. "What!" they exclaim, "would you rob us of the most precious gift of the Almighty; of the breath of life which he breathed into the body of Adam when he made him a living soul? Would you degrade this heavenly attribute to a level with the brute forces of nature?" But if there be anything in these exclamations, for they are nothing more, they simply remind us that He also breathed his life into every other living thing, for so far as all vital influences are concerned

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they are literally the same in the lower animals as in Man, and unless the materialistic view of the ruling Power in the universe is to be accepted, He still continues to breathe the breath of life (to use the old expression figuratively) not only into Man, but into every vitalised type of existence as it is born into the world. But we are not now dealing with the traditional or emotional aspects of the Creator, and it is our business to explain to those who have not followed the experiments and observations of scientific men, why the term "vitality" is rapidly losing its old signification, and is giving place to another yet unnamed and imperfectly understood modification of the physical forces. It was already stated in the last chapter that formerly the physical force incorrectly designated "motion," was supposed to be totally distinct from that called "heat"; which was itself believed to be specifically different from "light," and so on, until by the researches of men of science, amongst whom Grove was the most conspicuous, it was shown that all those forces are but modifications of one prime force, and that they are all correlated or convertible.* So we have treatises on 'Heat a mode of motion,'† where it is shown that the force "Heat" is not a different force from "Light," but that it is the same force modified as it operates upon varying forms of matter. So without professing to enter into details, or to speak with scientific accuracy concerning the changes which take place in physical force acting under different conditions, it may be safely affirmed, that instead of there being many distinct forces, as "motion," "light," "heat," "sound," &c., those are all so inti-

* Grove, 'On the Correlation of Physical Forces.' Longmans.

† Tyndall; also similar works by Balfour Stewart and others.

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mately correlated as to justify us in calling them One Power acting variously upon different conditions of matter.

And so, too, a great many of the natural operations of organised forms of existence were, until recently, believed to be performed under a mysterious influence called "vitality," a special quality supposed to appertain to plants and animals, as contradistinguished from the merely physical properties of minerals and other so-called inorganic substances, and the duration of that influence was called the "life" of the plant or animal; its cessation, death. But before even the correlation or convertibility of the physical forces was fully established, the students of living types had their attention drawn to the fact that relations similar to those which were found to exist amongst the physical forces, also present themselves between those forces and what had until then been known as "vital power," or "vitality." No sooner was the identity of physical and vital force suspected, than numerous students of biology set themselves to work, to trace out and follow the chain by which the two sets of forces are interlinked, foremost amongst them being Dr. W. B. Carpenter, and the result of the joint researches of physicists, chemists, and biologists has been as follows: All the processes by which plants and animals are generated, developed, and supported, as well as their mechanical motions, when they possess any, are due to the action of physical forces, just as a crystal is a purely physical formation. The stomach is a laboratory, or more properly it is part of a machine into which the raw material is mechanically forced, which is to be converted into "living" tissue. The animal thus supplied constitutes the entire machine, and if we follow the raw material, food, in its progress through

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the body we find that the various processes of digestion, propulsion through the arteries, oxidation in the lungs, deposition in the tissues, secretion, excretion, are all purely physical; differing somewhat in animals from similar processes in plants, and affected in the former by influences not observable in the latter; but still it is within the strict limits of scientific truth to say that the nutritive and developmental processes in plants and animals (often indifferently termed "vegetative"), as well as those of disorganisation and decay, are different phases of well-defined physical action; and therefore, by slightly changing the term of expression we may truthfully say that plants and animals are born, live, and die simply by the operation of the physical forces upon inorganic and organised matter.

It may not so much surprise the general reader to hear that the alimentary and developmental processes are the result of the operation of physical forces; for he knows very well that whilst his nutritive organs are in a healthy condition, he is hardly conscious of the transformations which in this respect are taking place in his body. He is well aware that in its passage through the alimentary system certain chemical changes are going on, over which he has no control; he knows, too, that without a thought of his, the mechanical action of the heart propels the blood to the extreme limits of his corporeal frame; but he may perhaps regard doubtfully the statement that locomotion, which is peculiarly under the domination of his will, should be the immediate result of the conversion of food in his body, just as literally as the progress of a locomotive arises from the consumption of fuel in its furnace. But so it is, nevertheless. If we require a certain amount

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of "power" in the steam-engine we must supply the furnaces with a given weight of fuel, which, being ignited, causes a certain volume of water to expand, and forces it to occupy an increased space; a piston is thus raised which sets the machinery in motion. There are moreover various kinds of fuel which "give out" heat in different degrees and so cause the expansion and consequent elevation of the piston in a longer or shorter period. Exactly the same thing occurs in the human body. Food taken in at the mouth, besides forming blood which is laid upon the tissues to supply waste and make up for disintegration, generates by a chemical process a certain degree of heat, and this is, popularly speaking, converted into motive power. So far have chemists and physicists pushed their experiments in this direction as to feed themselves and others at suitable periods with various kinds of food, and they have then made arduous mountain ascents themselves, or caused the subjects of their investigation to carry heavy weights. Thus it has been found that there are certain kinds of food, such as butter, fat, starch, &c., which are known to be "heat-giving," as distinguished from others, flesh meat, grain, &c., which contain a large proportion of nitrogen and are called "flesh-forming" foods; and some investigators have gone so far as to affirm that the power of motion is due entirely to the conversion of "heat-giving foods" only. Be that as it may, the fact, essential for our argument, is established beyond a doubt that the body of a man is as much a machine, fed by fuel and worked by the physical forces, as any locomotive that ever ran over a line of railway.

But what does all this prove? Some of our readers,

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in their anxiety to approach the adorable Being whom they believe to be the Author or Originator of these varied phases of force, will probably reply as follows: "It proves that the Deity, modifying what we call His physical forces, has set them in operation in the construction and maintenance of our bodies, without the necessity of any supervision on our part; for if we were compelled to think about the action of our stomach, of our heart, and of the other organs of our bodies, our minds would be so completely occupied in watching those organs that we should have no time left for mental development. And as to locomotion, we know very well that the mechanical forces are at work every time we lift an arm, therefore so long as you leave us our Will to direct their operation, we shall not quarrel with you about the secondary forces through which that Will acts."

This is no doubt the real state of the case, but it is reasoning *per saltum*. For it presupposes the existence of a personal Deity who directs, if He does not immediately set in motion those vital forces, and it assumes a "purpose" or "design" on His part, in relieving us from the responsibility of repairing the waste of our bodies. So the materialist or atheist might turn round upon us and say that Man is only relieved from this duty so long as he places himself in the proper "conditions of existence," and failing that, he must watch every mouthful he eats and drinks; must pour chemicals into his body, and establish an artificial digestion.

To prevent even the introduction of such difficulties into our argument, it is best therefore to proceed slowly, step by step, and to confine ourselves for the present to the

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statement of what has been scientifically demonstrated, and what will be found by our readers to be a truth admitted by all trustworthy physical and biological observers, whatever may be their metaphysical views. The entity, Force, which moulds the heavenly spheres, aggregates rocks and minerals, raises the waters of the ocean to the skies, to descend again upon our pastures; which reaches our organs of sense, and falls upon our flower-beds as "light" and "heat"; this same force also causes our plants and animals to live and grow; *obviously with that end* entering into, and acting through their organisation. It is not one force which attracts moisture towards plants and a specifically different force that causes this same moisture in its modified form, as sap, to circulate in their vascular system, but it is the same force; and so, too, in animals, the same power (or modifications of it) provides for their nutriment and growth, as well as causing them to decay and their inorganic materials to return to the earth, air, or water. Whatever "physical Force" is, that also, in a modified form, is "Vital Force," and as the scientific investigation of the former confirms the religious belief in an invisible Power, which we have figuratively called a spiritual Hand operating in nature, so the comparison and consideration of its varied phases still further corroborate that faith, inasmuch as it is found that under whatever conditions that Force operates, whether upon inorganic or organised forms of matter, it is still One and Indivisible.

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XI.

THE ACTION OF GOD'S FORCES IN NATURE.

"He in the thickest darkness dwells;
Performs the work, the cause conceals."

REV. B. BEDDOME.

So far, we have sought to show by the inductive method, that there is in the universe an invisible Force, Power, or Existence, without form or substance, which is omnipotent, ever active, and in one or other of its phases indissolubly linked with every kind of matter. And further, that however multiform the modifications of that entity may be, whether it be called "physical" Force, and known to our senses as motion, light, heat, sound, electricity, &c., or "vital," and engaged in the construction and maintenance of organised types of existence, it is still one and the same Power, its changes being dependent upon the material conditions under which it operates. There are now two or three trains of thought by which we might proceed in our argument, and attach intelligence to this unnamed Power.

First we might reason thus from the known to the unknown. We ourselves exist. One of the phases of our being is that we can set that mysterious Power to which we have referred in operation either directly with our hands, or indirectly by means of portions of the material world around us, already under the influence of the Power. We can raise the piston in a cylinder by manual force, or, by expanding water in a boiler and by allowing it in its

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expanded state, steam, to perform the work of raising the piston, under our guidance.

In this case we should adduce a large number of examples as evidence that we can change the character of the earth's surface, that we can produce new and beautiful varieties of plants and animals, and, as we shall mention hereafter, in the same manner as such varieties are produced in nature; that we can utilise the sun's rays in many novel and interesting modes for our own use or enjoyment; that we can produce artificial light when we are deprived of sunlight, and that in a thousand other ways *our* intelligence enables us to wield and modify nature's Forces, and mould the matter of the universe so far as it comes within our reach. We should then seek to show that what we can do imperfectly under the impulse and direction of our wills, is every day done more perfectly and systematically in nature, and was so performed long before we or any conscious being of a kind known to us, came into existence. And so we should be justified in concluding that an absolute Will is in operation in the universe to which our will bears the same relation as the agent to the principal, or the servant to his master in all the concerns of our every-day existence; that we have been brought into the world to take an intelligent part in its development and governance, and that although we are permitted a certain limited discretion in the performance of our duty, we are always subject to the regulations and orders of our Superior.

This would be a perfectly legitimate form of argument, for it would be consistent with reason, and based upon experience. But it would find two classes of objectors; the

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atheists, who would affirm that we are the highest intelligent beings of whom we have any cognizance, whilst it can be shown that the whole of nature's work is done mechanically by nature herself; and secondly, certain naturalists who, although they believe the Deity to have set the universe in motion and "impressed His laws" upon matter in the beginning, deny the necessity of His being immanent and still active in the physical world, and who assert that they have a nobler conception of Him than those who require him to interfere in every petty act of nature. And such reasoners would probably seize upon the very illustration we have given above, and would say, "Does the superior interfere in all the minor concerns of his affairs? does he not leave them to be executed by his inferiors after he has once issued his commands?"

The arguments of the atheist ought to be refuted by this or any other attempt to show that the belief of all ages is true and real, otherwise our task has been and will be a vain one. The second position is not so easily shaken, because we know not how and when it has pleased the adorable Creator to put his laws in execution, but there are fatal objections to it, which will become apparent as we proceed. Our illustration of principal and agent is a strict analogy; the materialist (in the scientific sense of the word) would be turning it into a simile only. The *mind* of the superior deputes his powers to the *mind* of the servant; and so the supreme Mind delegates a portion of his power to us. But if it were assumed that Matter is so impressed with "law" as to need no guiding Power at the present moment, there would be not the faintest reason to believe that a Creator or a Deity had impressed "laws" upon

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it at all, for "law" really means nothing more than a prescribed and invariable mode of action. In other words, the argument would favour the atheist, just as much as it would the materialistic believer in a God. But we must not quarrel with the exponents of the "reign of law," for they are earnest and conscientious observers, and it is to them, amongst others, that we shall be indebted for the record of facts to be used in the further development of our picture of the Deity in nature. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a concise account of the views entertained by the most advanced observers, concerning the mode and end towards which the natural forces operate.

And what do the most advanced theories of the universe reveal to us in this respect; no matter who may be the scientific expositors? First of all, if there be any meaning whatever attachable to the words "order" and "progress," it is to be found in the mode in which the natural forces are engaged, both in the grander as well as in the more minute phenomena of the universe. Without discussing the various cosmical theories which have from time to time been propounded, we may safely say that all astronomers and physicists are agreed, that the past history and present condition of the universe denote the continuous action of a Power which has not at any time compromised the safety of the heavenly spheres by mistake, accident, or irregularity. If it sometimes appears that a failure has taken place in the grander cosmical operations, such apparent defects turn out in the long run to be the results of our ignorance and imperfect comprehension of the phenomena, and not errors in the calculations of the ruling Power. It is well known, for example, that in the earth's passage through space, it en-

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counters a vast number of minute planetary bodies, known as meteors, and our autumn evenings have more than once been made memorable by a magnificent display of those bright strangers. We pass through a complete zone of them, of enormous extent, at regular intervals, and until recently it was a matter of conjecture what could be the origin or utility of those bodies. The most advanced astronomical observers however, have come to the conclusion that notwithstanding the perfect equilibrium which is maintained in the solar system, and which keeps large and small planets alike in their regular orbits, vast numbers of those meteors are constantly being brought too much within the sphere of the sun's attraction, and that showers of them are continually pouring on its surface.* This would appear to be a double error of Providence; first it would seem as though one or more planets had been broken up into particles before or after they were formed: secondly, the solar system would appear to be not so equally balanced as it should be. But is there no object in these bodies falling upon the sun? That luminary is constantly radiating heat into space in every direction; and how is that loss of heat to be restored to it? Just on the same principle as the motion of the cannon-ball when brought into collision with the plated target or vessel, became converted into heat, so is the motive force of these meteorites believed to be converted into the heat of the sun; and so these apparently useless bodies

* We believe the originator of this view was Sir John Herschel, who has been lost to the world whilst these pages are passing through the press. It is discredited by certain physicists, who believe that comets consist of meteoric stones in collision, consequently the principle remains the same. Numerous other illustrations of the truth here enunciated present themselves to reflecting observers of nature.

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not only afford a spectacle on our fine autumn evenings, but as solar heat, they help to liquefy our winter-snows in spring, and to ripen our golden harvest in the summer. Whether or not this theory be perfectly established, there are a thousand other instances of what appear to be needless operations and phenomena in nature, of which the use seems to have been defined and appointed, ages before our little race had come into existence.

And what is the known effect of the forces of nature, where they operate with regularity and order? It is a slow, steady, dignified progress, from the formless to the formed; a continued action and reaction between the visible and the invisible universe, in which not even the most sceptical observer can fail to perceive a definite plan, commenced apparently in the beginning of time (as we understand it *) and still in active progress. It may appear surplusage to many of our readers that we should explain what is the most advanced cosmical theory of the universe, the "slow and sure" developmental doctrine, but a brief reference to it, with all its uncertainties and imperfections, will be necessary for those whose time or occupations have prevented them from following scientific pursuits.

In regard to the origin and formation of the heavenly bodies, little is known. The most widely-accepted hypothesis is perhaps that called the "nebular theory," which assumes that originally all space was occupied with "nebulous matter," and that "forces" being set to work in

* The difficulty of conceiving the meaning of "time" and "eternity" probably lies at the root of all those discussions as to what it pleased the Almighty to do in what we call the past, and what He does at present, for to an Eternal Being there can be no past nor future, but only one ever-active present.

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various parts, called centres of motion, a number of large celestial spheres or spheroids were formed. That those, revolving rapidly upon their axes, became flattened at their poles, and enlarging proportionately at their equators gave off rings which were broken up, and in their turn assumed the shape of spheres, which continued to revolve on their axes and around the parent globes. These again gave off secondary rings, which were also consolidated into smaller spheres. The primary bodies are now known as suns, or fixed stars; the secondary, planets, and the tertiary spheres as moons or satellites; and in one case, that of Saturn, some of the rings are supposed to have retained their annular shape.

As to the earth, concerning whose history we have more positive data, there is also still much that is obscure; but it is now generally admitted by scientific men of all shades of religious belief, that it is of enormous antiquity compared with the age formerly assigned to it by orthodox theologians.

That the physical features of its surface have frequently changed, there is no doubt whatever, continents having existed, or the present continents been connected together, where there is now sea or ocean, and *vice versâ*. Also that these changes have been brought about as a rule by slow degrees, through the gradual rising and sinking of land; insomuch that marine fossil remains have been found deposited in formations high up in mountainous districts, showing that at one time those altitudes must have been on the sea level.

One of our most eminent geologists has said concerning these terrestrial changes:

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> "As geologists, we learn that it is not only the present condition of the globe which has been suited to the accommodation of myriads of living creatures, but that many former states also have been adapted to the organisation and habits of prior races of beings. The disposition of seas, continents, and islands, and the climates have varied; the species likewise have been changed; and yet they have all been so modelled in types analogous to those of existing plants and animals, *as to indicate throughout a perfect harmony of design and unity of purpose.*" *

This brings us to the question of organic life. Concerning the "races of beings" or living types of plants and animals which have peopled the globe, much has been learned, but very much remains to be investigated. It is not known at what period of the world's history (that is to say in what geological formation—for we know very little about the earth's age) either plants or animals first made their appearance, indeed it is not accurately determined what is the scientific distinction between a plant and an animal. We know, or believe we know, the difference between a tree and a horse, because the one possesses vegetable attributes highly developed and exhibits none of the characteristics of an animal, whilst in the other, the animal properties completely eclipse the inferior attributes of plant life. But the microscopist can tell of innumerable types of existence, of which it is impossible to predicate whether they are plants or animals. Notwithstanding all this ignorance, however, it is each day becoming more and more certain that every individual plant or animal that has existed on the earth's

* Lyell's 'Principles of Geology,' 10th edition, vol. ii., p. 613. Murray. We have italicised the concluding words for the purposes of our argument.

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surface has been the offshoot, by some generative process (for there are several methods of reproduction), of a previously existing form of life; and this developmental theory is greatly strengthened by the fact above referred to, that the passage from plant life to animal life is so imperceptible as to defy detection even by the most profound and experienced observers. But some of our readers may remind us that we have not yet accounted for the transition from inorganic to organic life; from stones or rocks, to the humblest lichens with which they are clothed.

Here, too, we are bound to plead ignorance, although the subject has been agitated for more than a century. The most rationalistic and outspoken biologists maintain that no new plant or animal has yet been artificially produced, notwithstanding that innumerable attempts have been made to do so, and although such attempts have been over and over again pronounced by the experimenters to have been successful. The germs of life, they say, are so widely diffused everywhere, in air, in the water, and throughout matter generally, that when experimentalists have sought to bring inorganic substances together under conditions suitable for the spontaneous production of the humblest types of living beings, it has been impossible to guarantee that one or more germs should not have found their way into the infusion; whilst, on the other hand, plants and animals of comparatively high organisation make their appearance in such apparently unapproachable localities—in the living tissues of animals, for example, where the method of ingress of the germs has been laboriously traced—that all wonder as to their apparently abnormal presence in artificially prepared infusions has

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ceased. But whilst the warmest supporters of the theory of evolution, which naturally suggests, as the beginning of life, the creation of the lowest living types in ages long past from inorganic materials brought together under favourable conditions; whilst those resolutely deny that any trustworthy experiment has yet been made in support of their own theory, they are prepared to find at any time that either Man in his laboratory, or "Nature" in hers, has brought, and does bring "protoplasm" into existence; protoplasm being, if our view be correct, the plastic substance upon which God's "vital forces" operate, and of which living animal and plant forms are constituted—the "basis of life," as it has been termed.

Without professing, therefore, to explain, or attempting even to speculate upon the mode in which living beings originated on the earth's surface, the students of biology account for the presence of successive races of plants and animals upon the natural and only rational theory that they have all sprung from one or a few lowly forms, which came into existence at some early period in this world's history, when the surrounding conditions were fitted for their support and development; and that by slow degrees they have become modified and adapted to the various geographical and climatal changes through which the earth has passed.

Various have been the surmises or hypotheses, more or less weightily supported by facts, as to the means whereby these slow and imperceptible changes have been brought about; and the most popular theory amongst scientific men is that so laboriously and conscientiously expounded by Darwin, known as "the theory of natural selection."

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According to that writer a species of plant or animal is only a well-marked and permanent variety, and "the innumerable species, genera and families of organic beings with which the world is peopled have all descended, each within its own class or group, from common parents, and have all been modified in the course of descent."* They have in all probability been derived from "a few forms" or "one" into which "life with its several powers" was "originally breathed by the Creator," and "from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved."† The changes referred to have been produced, according to the same author, by "laws acting around us." "These laws taken in the largest sense, being Growth and Reproduction; Inheritance, which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a ratio of increase, so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to 'Natural Selection,' entailing divergence of character and extinction of *less-improved* forms."‡

These views have not only been arrived at from the observation of natural phenomena and the records of the Creation, but by experiments in artificial selection and breeding made by the author himself; and if we had followed out the other line of argument referred to in the earlier portion of this chapter, we might have used his experiences amongst our examples, to show that there is a Divine Power ever at work in nature selecting and perpetuating those

* 'Origin of Species,' p. 542. † Ibid., p. 577.

‡ Ibid., p. 577. We italicise two words for the purposes of our argument.

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forms of life which are the best adapted for the physical conditions of the earth's surface.

Passing on to the question of Man's origin, we find for that, and for the evolution of the higher animals from inferior types, the introduction of a new law to have been necessary, namely, the law of "Sexual Selection." This, according to the author just quoted, rests chiefly on the phenomenon that the male sex only in the higher animals, has been endowed with attractive features, such as beautiful plumage, &c., that is to say that those properties have been "perpetuated" in the male sex by natural selection; and furthermore "these characters in innumerable instances are fully developed at maturity, and often during only part of the year, which is the breeding season."* And, remarks the writer, "*It is incredible that all this display should be purposeless.*"

This ornamentation of the male sex is however only one cause of the sexual selection and perpetuation of suitable individuals, and as it might be naturally expected, the mental qualities of our race play an important part in this theory. In the author's opinion, it is "the cerebral system" which has not only "indirectly influenced the progressive development of various bodily structures," but also those mental qualities, including "courage, pugnacity, perseverance," as well as "bright colours, stripes, and marks, and ornamental appendages," which "have been indirectly gained by one sex or the other through the influence of love and jealousy, through the appreciation of the beautiful in sound, colour or form, and through the exercise of a

* 'Descent of Man,' vol. ii., p. 399. Murray.

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choice, and these powers," says the author, "manifestly depend upon the development of the cerebral system."* In other words, although the author does not say so, those highest manifestations of man's delegated power, the intellectual faculties, are continually acting upon as well as through the brain, the instrument of their activity, and modifying that organ so as to fit it for the operation of still higher phases of mental power.

But we have no concern at present with the metaphysical views expressed by any of the authors whom we have quoted. We have only to weigh and consider the facts referred to in the preceding outline of what might be called the most advanced System of Nature. This embraces the nebular theory of the heavens; the slow and continuous changes (resembling those now in operation) which have taken place in the physical and climatic conditions of our earth; changes of which the object, according to all classes of scientific observers and thinkers, has been to prepare it for habitation, first by the lower, then the higher types of existence. The evolutional theory of living plants and animals, or the modified descent of all forms of life from pre-existing ones, brought about by the secondary operations of nature, and finally the brute origin and gradual development of Man himself; all these facts and phenomena may safely be accepted by us to sustain another, and a most important step in our argument.

They teach us that the invisible and omnipresent Power which scientific experience has shown to be operating upon

* 'Descent of Man,' vol. ii., p. 402.

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inert matter, and which is variously known as physical Force, in its phases of motion, heat, light, chemical activity, &c.; or as "Vitality" or "Vital energy" in its operations the realm of organised nature; that this Power which is One and Indivisible, has been in all past times, and is still operating upon a definite "Plan," under the guidance or control of what are called "laws," or more correctly speaking, after an invariable method.

This is what we may learn from the study of the valuable scientific works which have been so senselessly attacked and condemned by those who should have been the very first to study them for the truths which they contain. We shall have to consult them again, and make them, perhaps, in one or two cases, unwilling witnesses in our cause; meanwhile we will avail ourselves of the few passages which we have already italicised in the preceding pages, and will conclude with the further affirmation that the Forces of Nature have been at work in such a manner "as to indicate throughout a perfect harmony of design, and unity of purpose";* that their operation has had the effect not only of extinguishing "less-improved" forms,† but also that it has led "to the improvement of each creature in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of existence";‡ and where the result has been varied loveliness, as in the ornaments and decorations of the most beautiful living creatures, we do not hesitate to echo the utilitarian sentiment of the evolutionist, that "it is incredible that all this display should be purposeless."§

* Lyell, see *ante*.
† Darwin, see *ante*.
‡ 'Origin of Species,' p. 153.
§ Darwin, see *ante*.

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XII.

THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN NATURE.

"Now, that which can contrive, which can design, must be a person. These capacities constitute personality, for they imply consciousness and thought. They require that which can perceive an end or purpose, as well as the power of providing means, and of directing them to their end."—PRIESTLEY and PALEY.

"His counsels never change the scheme
Which his first thoughts designed."—WATTS.

A CAREFUL perusal and consideration of Paley's argument in favour of the existence of the Deity, based upon the axiom that where there are evidences of design there must also be a Designer, enables us to comprehend at once why certain thinkers known as "materialists" or believers in the omnipotence of matter to perform its own work, have declared the argument from design to have failed; as well as to account for the very existence of materialism itself.

Paley attempted to enforce his argument by analogy, but as it has been frequently said, analogy is a most dangerous weapon to wield in controversy, and so it has proved in his case. He compared the universe to the mechanism of a watch of which the spring is the motive power, and assuming that one who is engaged on the examination of its various parts understands their uses, he argued that inasmuch as the observer sees in the watch evidences of design, therefore no counter-arguments could

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possibly be urged sufficient to convince him that an intelligent mind had not been concerned in the construction of the watch.

But suppose that instead of an intelligent man ever so little acquainted with mechanical science, the observer had been a savage or even a very young child who had never before seen a watch, would he, from the observation of its movements, come to the conclusion that it has had a maker? Certainly not; it would have to be explained to him that it was made by a living person, or he would in all probability assume that the watch itself was endowed with life. In other words, if he were told of the existence of the maker, and if the uses of the watch were fully explained to him, it is probable that he would believe the one and understand the other, but that, too, would depend upon the turn of his mind.

Now, we are practically savages and little children in our knowledge of the phenomena of the universe (if not in a great many other matters besides), and amongst the observers of nature there are some whose minds become so warped with close investigation and constant flexion, that when they seek to resume their natural attitude and direct their thoughts into new channels, all appears distorted and confused. The image of the material universe, or of some of its phenomena, has become fixed upon the retina of the mind's eye, and obscures its vision, instead of having simply left there an impression which would serve as part of the general picture which is present in its healthy condition. This is not mere assertion. There are living in our day rigid calculating mathematicians of a high order of intellect who believe they have seen ghosts. There are

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living naturalists who go the full length of the doctrine of evolution, believing that no living type was ever produced excepting by the agency of secondary forces, strictly according to "law," and who would stoutly maintain that it is quite beneath the dignity of the Almighty that he should interfere with the established order of events, even for the purpose of bringing about some great moral or religious reform, and yet these very persons will tell you that they have been seated with a few others professing to be of the same faith with themselves, at a table in a dark room hermetically sealed against the introduction from without of any material object, and that yet "spiritual" powers have dropped upon that table a bouquet of flowers, fresh-plucked, with the dew of heaven still upon them!

There are others, again, whose minds never do return to their natural attitude. They are always looking at "phenomena." Those see in nature one continued sequence of cause and effect; nothing more. They see perpetual motion, they perceive the "spring," but it only differs from the wheels in being elastic and made of steel, instead of rigid and of brass; it has properties, and the wheels have properties; it performs a function, so do the wheels, so does the watch; it is a beautiful mechanism; a useful one. The watch may have an owner, but they have found it, and as nobody claims it, they put it into their pockets, frequently examine, adjust, and admire it. They may use it wisely, and even kindly lend it to a neighbour; perhaps they explain its uses and mechanism to their children; leave it in their will as though it belonged to them, and—"après cela le déluge." So they regard

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and deal with nature, life, and immortality. But notwithstanding this colour blindness in some men, this indifference on the part of others; notwithstanding imperfect analogies, limited surveys of nature, or untutored intelligence, Paley's theory still holds good, and it is a truism that where we can distinctly trace evidences of design, there must be a Designer. Observation, experience, and as we shall find presently, the best scientific authorities all testify to the presence of design in nature; and even the credulous believer in spiritualism pays an unconscious homage to the mysterious Power that rules the universe. The denial of such a Power leaves all things mysterious and inexplicable, and all reasoning from such premises ends in absurdity. The admission of the existence of one mystery removes all others and affords a rational explanation of every natural phenomenon.

Let us for a moment test the value of the strictly materialistic theory, by assuming that there is no designing Mind operating in the universe, only Nature acting according to Law; and let us endeavour to apply this theory to the elucidation of natural phenomena. Everyone knows that iron is almost always found in close proximity with coal; that without coal, iron can only be applied to a very limited extent; that it would be impossible in the present terrestrial and climatal condition of considerable areas of our globe for Man to exist without largely availing himself of appliances made of iron; that iron and coal have been two of the chief civilising agencies in our race; and that both minerals were deposited in the earth's strata ages before Man or any animal that could use them, made its appearance on the surface. Then

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Nature deposited these materials, but reasoning Man has learned their uses and applied them for his improvement.

Again: There was a time when England was an agricultural and a pastoral country. At that time cattle were born and grazed on its meadows, and their flesh sufficed to feed its people. Corn was in superabundance and was exported from its shores. Its towns were isolated, and their inhabitants few in numbers. At that time, too, there were cultivated abroad certain plants, flax and cotton, the seeds of which were employed for sowing purposes; whilst savage or half-civilised people had learned to utilise the fibre only, for the manufacture of rude fabrics. Now England is rapidly becoming a vast manufacturing town. On the sites of extensive farms there rise tall chimneys; and blast furnaces vomit forth their flames. The coal and iron provided by "Nature," are being converted into ploughshares to be sent to other lands that the inhabitants may till their soil, and grow corn for *us*. Vast meadows are green, not with pasturage, but with alkali waste and the refuse of manufactories, and our meat is no longer grown and fed, that, too, is "manufactured." The oxen, brought at present from surrounding countries, and to be imported one day from other continents, arrive here as so many half-starved, yet living machines, to work up into their own substance artificial foods manufactured in England or abroad. What are those artificial foods? The fibre of the flax and cotton plants is still used as heretofore in textile fabrics, but the seeds now serve, after yielding up a valuable oil, to feed the stock, without which our rapidly increasing population could not subsist.

Here, too, it may be said by some, the operations of

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"Nature" have produced these materials, but it is Man whose designing mind has utilised them. Well, let us carry the argument one step farther.

"Nature," we will say, has arranged that when the live stock, the living machine, has extracted from its food those constituents which are needed for its existence, the excreta which pass away from it are absorbed into the soil, there attracted by the rootlets of plants, and thus help to provide the animal with a new kind of fodder, if not the same as it originally consumed.

Well, at the time we were speaking of, when England was still a pastoral country, the growth of plants was stimulated by this natural manure. But the time for that also has passed away, and the supply of animal manure falls far short of the country's wants. Fortunately there existed, it may be millions of years ago, strange creatures whose excretions were evidently not absorbed into the soil and converted into plants, for they are found fossil to-day, accumulated in vast deposits in various parts of England. And fortunately, too, these fossil remains are easily soluble in an acid produced from another mineral substance, sulphur, which has been in existence longer even than the fossil coprolites; for the combination of these two substances has enabled our chemists to produce artificial manures which are eagerly absorbed by the rootlets of plants, and are even more efficacious for their cultivation than natural manure. And the man who has thus multiplied our resources for the increased production of fodder, who has caused "two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before," is called a benefactor of his race.

Now, what conclusions does the atheist draw from the

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consideration of these natural and artificial operations? Why, that "Nature" created the animals æons before man existed, and that they then deposited the coprolites, which accidentally accumulated during long ages in the world's history: That "Nature" in like manner deposited the sulphur: That "Nature" so constructed the rootlets of the unconscious plants as to enable them to absorb alike the natural or the artificial manures, and adapted the conscious animals to feed either upon the blades of grass or upon the refuse of the oil factory; and that all which "Nature" has performed during past ages, and continues to perform to-day, is done without design or purpose, but only according to "Law"; in other words, it is done as it *is* done. Whilst Man is the only intelligent being in existence; Man discovered the value of the refuse seed as a fattening medium, and of the dissolved coprolites as an artificial manure. This he managed to do at the fitting times; at the critical periods, when otherwise his food supply would have failed him; this he effected without a teacher, and for this he alone is entitled to the epithet of "Benefactor."

Verily, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God!"

We should not have wasted the time of our readers in the *reductio ad absurdum* of a doctrine which denies the existence of a Designing Mind in nature, if the illustrations which we have employed did not, at the same time, serve to guide those who desire to study the subject further, into what appear to us the proper channels of observation. It is in the comparison of the grander operations of Nature in times past and present, with the more restricted sphere of Man's action; between the great Chemist of the

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universe, and the ignorant but aspiring chemist Man; it is in the adaptation of those grand natural works of which the foundations were laid in the distant past to the wants and desires of our little race to-day, that the magnitude and beneficence of God's designs become apparent. This is the solid basis upon which natural theology will in the future be founded. But the student must be careful even here, not to construe too hastily the phenomena of nature, else he will give the materialist an opportunity of throwing a stumbling-block in his path which may prove very inconvenient to his progress. The design may be so obvious as to deceive the unwary observer into a belief that there can be but one mode of execution, and so judging the acts of God by his own human methods, he may find himself corrected and perhaps confounded by the more experienced observer of material phenomena, for whom "Law" is an all-sufficient First Cause. A single illustration (which will suggest many others) will suffice as a guide in such cases, and it will be taken from the phenomena termed "protective resemblances" in the animated world.

Before us lies a beautiful entomological specimen. It is an Indian butterfly with outspread wings. On the upper side, those are of a rich brown colour, with a bright band across each forewing, and naturally we should expect the under surface to bear some resemblance to the upper. On turning it over, however, we find what seems to be no butterfly at all, but two brown beech leaves, divided into halves so as to constitute the four wings, with all the venations and markings of the leaves as they exist in nature. Now, naturalists who have observed these insects

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alive, and are acquainted with their habits, tell us that when they are at rest on a bough, and the wings are folded, it would be impossible to distinguish them from the surrounding foliage.

The phenomenon, to an unreflecting observer, and, as we shall find presently, to some who do reflect, would seem to be merely an accidental one. But it has an obvious purpose in nature; for whilst the insect is in flight it has a chance of eluding the attacks of birds of prey, which are attracted by its gaudy colouring; but if its bright orange wings were exposed to the keen sight of its enemies during its moments of rest, it would be pounced upon by every passing bird, and that race of butterflies would soon be exterminated. Now, although these circumstances are not so well known to the general reader, almost everyone is acquainted with the fact that the markings on a butterfly's wings are the result of the disposition upon their surface of a vast number of variously-coloured microscopical scales, and a superficial reasoner, especially one whose mind immediately associates design with the Designer, would be apt to regard this phenomenon as powerful evidence in favour of the special creation of distinct species. He would say, "here the hand of God is apparent; He has formed this little insect in precise accordance with its needs, and with the surrounding conditions of existence." But he would be met by the apparently well-founded assertion of the materialist, that there is no evidence of design in this phenomenon, nor of any Divine action; but that it is simply the result of an accidental concurrence of circumstances, the operating cause being "Natural Selection." For there can be no doubt whatever that the presence of

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these insects is the consequence of the "survival of the fittest" in the "struggle for existence"; those butterflies which presented the best mark to birds of prey having been exterminated, whilst others which were less conspicuous, transmitted their useful peculiarities with ever-increasing prominence to their progeny, until, owing to their greater immunity from danger, they increased in number and became a persistent species. "This being the case" (the materialist will say), "your illustration proves nothing, and we have as much right to doubt, as you have to believe in an imaginary Deity and His designs." But a moment's reflection will show that the inference is as false as the facts are true, and that a rationalist should be the last man so to argue, for the theory of natural selection in no wise affects the question of design, but only that of execution. Let us for a moment transfer the scene to another struggle for existence.

Suppose an intelligent man, accustomed to reasoning, observed, for the first time, a battle proceeding between two great armies, which encountered each other in a richly-wooded country; and suppose the various regiments wore uniforms of different colours; some bright scarlet, others blue, and others, again, of a sombre green; and that those who were dressed in green were stationed about the woods and amongst the trees. If whilst the fight was going on, the observer noticed that a greater number of soldiers were killed who were dressed in scarlet or blue, than of those who were habited in green, would he talk of this as an accidental circumstance? Would he say that because he could not see the general who was in command, therefore he declined to believe in his existence; or would his argu-

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ment be any the more rational if he said that those soldiers were ordered to be clothed in green "in the beginning," as a protection from the shots of the enemy, and that now they station themselves about woods in self-defence, and there is no need of a general to direct their movements?

But in nature the phenomenon of protective resemblance presents far better evidence of a creative, protective, and ever-watchful designing Power, than does the one cited, of the presence of a commanding general. For, first, the insect possesses no means of defence in the battle of life excepting its "accidental" investment, whilst the soldier is armed with a weapon which he knows how to use intelligently: secondly, whilst the natural phenomenon as clearly leads to the survival of this species, as the possession of the green uniform results in the survival of the wearer, yet in the one case the soldier may not be the bravest nor the most serviceable, and it might have been better for military purposes that the men in blue or scarlet should have been saved, whilst, as Darwin has very significantly said, in nature we have always "the survival of the fittest": and thirdly, whilst the general is only able to avail himself of what are to him accidental features in the face of the country in which he is manœuvring his forces, in nature an unseen Power is at work directing not only the sentient and active living types, by what we call instinct, but also bringing about the succession of physical phenomena which are requisite for the operation of that instinct. In other words, if we compare the phenomena of protective resemblances in nature with similar acts performed by Man, we shall find that not only does the comparison point unmistakably to the existence of an over-

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ruling Providence, but it establishes the higher wisdom and the perfect foresight of the Deity. Man clothes the soldier in green that the enemy may not be able to make a mark of him in the surrounding woods, or at best, because it is there that he is often compelled to perform military duties without the power of using his weapons of defence; and in so far men unconsciously imitate the operations of nature. But God first clothed the trees in green, and then, when the fitting time arrived He, figuratively speaking, painted, as he continues to paint the wings of this butterfly in colours conformable with the surrounding scene, because this is the particular species that He wishes to survive, as being the one requisite for the perfection of His plan in nature.

Leaving now the field of observation and induction, which is as wide as the universe itself, we will conclude this chapter on the evidences of design in nature, by having recourse once more to orthodox authorities, not in theology, but in science; and we shall find that in whatever realm of nature they may have investigated, however much their religious opinions may otherwise vary, or whatever diversity there may be in the expression of their views; the leading scientific thinkers of the day are substantially agreed on this particular question.

Sir John Herschel, in speaking of the sun, makes it the instrument of God's highest designs for man's existence and support; he almost endows our luminary with life and thought:—

> "The Sun, he says, is the Almoner of the Almighty, the delegated dispenser to us of light and warmth, as well as the centre of attraction, and as such, the immediate source of

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all our comforts, and indeed of the very possibility of our existence on Earth." *

Sir Roderick Murchison says:—

"I therefore cannot but believe that he who, looking to the earliest visible signs of life, traces thenceforward a rise in the scale of beings until Man appeared on earth, must acknowledge in these successive works continuous manifestations of the design of a Creator." †

Sir Charles Lyell, another geologist, whose scientific views in some respects differ from those of the preceding writer, says:—

"But in whatever direction we pursue our researches, whether in time or space, we discover everywhere the clear proofs of a Creative Intelligence, and of His foresight, wisdom, and power." ‡

Schleiden, an eminent German phytologist, says, in a chapter on the æsthetics of plant life:

"Der Naturforscher kennt und versteht keine andere Entwickelung als den Fortschritt vom Einfacheren zum Zusammengesetzteren, vom Unvollkommneren zum Vollkommneren."

The naturalist knows and understands no development but the progression from the simpler to the more complex, from the imperfect to the perfect. §

And that there may be no mistake as to the Power which brings about this development, it may be added that on the preceding page he quotes the verse, "The heavens

* Essays on Scientific Subjects, p. 62. Strahan.
† 'Siluria,' p. 506, 4th edition. Murray.
‡ 'Principles of Geology,' p. 613, 10th edition. Murray.
§ 'Die Pflanze und ihr Leben,' p. 338. Leipzig. Engelmann. 1855.

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declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork."

Huxley says:

> "I hold with the Materialist, that the human body like all living bodies is a machine, all the operations of which will sooner or later be explained on physical principles. . . . . But when the Materialists stray beyond the borders of their path, and begin to talk about there being nothing else in the universe but matter, force, and necessary laws, and all the rest of *their* grenadiers, I decline to follow them."*

And again:

> "I shall have to consider animals, not as physiological apparatuses merely, not as related to other forms of life and to climatal conditions, not as successive tenants of the earth, but as fabrics, each of which is built upon a certain plan."†

And finally Darwin, whom we have so often quoted, when he finds it necessary for the purpose of supporting the doctrine of natural selection, but certainly not with any desire to prove the presence of an active designing Mind immanent in nature, even Darwin makes the following confession of faith:

> "How fleeting are the wishes and efforts of Man! How short his time! and consequently how poor will his products be compared with those accumulated by Nature during whole geological periods. Can we wonder, then, that Nature's productions should be far 'truer' in character than Man's productions; that they should be infinitely better adapted to the most complex conditions of life, and should plainly have the stamp of a far higher workmanship? It may be

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* Lay Sermons, &c., pp. 372–3. Macmillan.

† 'On the Elements of Comparative Anatomy,' p. 2. Churchill. 1864.

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> metaphorically said that Natural Selection is daily and hourly scrutinising throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest, rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life." *

This is what one of the profoundest naturalists and ablest scientific generalisers of our day says, "metaphorically," of the Power which he cannot but admit is "daily and hourly" scrutinising the universe. To him that Power so far resembles the human mind as to see what he calls "good" and "bad" in nature, to select wherever the opportunity "offers"; not to create its own opportunities; and to be incessantly planning, working, and improving. But whatever may be his peculiar views concerning the Power in operation, yet the study of the work it accomplishes he pronounces to be "truer than Man's productions," and to bear "the stamp of far higher workmanship."

This is all that is requisite for our argument. The cumulative evidence of the most advanced men of science, and a comprehensive observation of nature, have established the existence in the universe of a Force or Power, distinct from and operating upon inert matter. They have exhibited that Power as omnipotent, omnipresent, ever associated with matter, which from time immemorial it has been moulding into definite shapes of ever-increasing complexity. This Power, notwithstanding its varied phases, has been shown to be One and Indivisible, and to have been operating after what appears to be a well-defined

* 'Origin of Species,' p. 95.

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plan, towards a definite end; and finally, the examination of the productions of that Power, as well as the contemplation of its *modus operandi*, have clearly proved that it acts under, and is almost beyond a doubt immediately associated with an omniscient and all-surveying Intelligence.

This association of Power and Intelligence in the universe, Man has learned to regard as the ideal of goodness, and he has consequently called it "God."

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XIII.

THE PERFECTION OF GOD IN NATURE.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—MATTHEW v., v. 48.

"The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."—PSALM xix., v. 1.

"He is also contained in this drop of water."—THE VEDA.

"Du kannst auf's Feld nicht gehn, ohn' irgend eine Blume
Zu finden, welche sagt von ihres Schöpfer's Ruhme."
F. RÜCKERT.

(Thou canst not wander in the meadow, without finding
Some lovely blossom, of its Maker's fame reminding.)

THE perfection of God's works and ways in nature has been sung by all peoples and in every land; but the attempt on the part of any writer, were he ever so talented, to depict him as He reveals himself in the universe, would be as vain as it would be presumptuous. Those who desire to contemplate his perfections must place themselves under the guidance of experienced observers, and study with their own senses. They will then feel as well as see what He is revealing of himself, and the pursuit of such knowledge will not alone afford them intellectual pleasure, but unconsciously to them, it will exercise a most elevating influence upon their minds. All we can pretend to do here, is to indicate a few of the channels of observation which are open to us, and where we may contemplate his wondrous ways, either with the

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unaided sense, or with the help of those instruments which have imparted to us a second sight, the telescope, the microscope, and the spectroscope. In former chapters we have had occasion to illustrate some of the Divine attributes, as prescience, or forethought, in the storing up of fuel and useful metals for Man's use ages before he appeared on earth; in planting trees of which every portion was, and in some lands is still, indispensable to his existence; in painting insects with protective resemblances to surrounding objects, to secure them from the attacks of their feathered enemies. Those were, however, but isolated cases, which are multiplied indefinitely when we come to seek for them in nature; nor are they confined to one group or class of animals. An experienced observer has said: "There is a general harmony in Nature between the colours of an animal and those of its habitation. Arctic animals are white, desert animals are sand-coloured; dwellers among leaves and grass are green; nocturnal animals are dusky. These colours are not universal, but are very general, and are seldom reversed. Going on a little farther, we find birds, reptiles, and insects so tinted and mottled, as exactly to match the rock, or bark, or leaf, or flower they are accustomed to rest upon—and thereby effectually concealed." *

* Wallace on 'Natural Selection.' Macmillan. 1870. The author does not see in this adaptation of means to ends the result of the "direct volition of the Creator," but only of "the action of comparatively well-known and simple causes." If any of our ecclesiastical readers should feel aggrieved by the omission of theological references in modern scientific works, we recommend them to read this, one of the ablest treatises on natural history, and after that they will probably be content to let men of science "render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's."

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Besides examples of forethought we have also had occasion to touch upon instances where the apparent violation of the universal order of things has really proved to be indispensable for carrying out the great scheme of nature, as the showers of meteorites, which are supposed to be continually falling into the sun, to renew its expended heat and light; and not only may we, with the telescope, follow the heavenly spheres in their passage through space, and contemplate in their grandest aspects the power and unerring accuracy of divine action; but we may observe on the neighbouring planets features which resemble the physical peculiarities of our own earth, denoting their common origin; as, for example, the seas and continents, and the arctic and antarctic snows of Mars. Nay, by an analysis with the spectroscope and comparison of the rays of light which reach us from our sun and from the fixed stars and which reveal the presence of the same forms of matter everywhere, we may almost with certainty predicate the common origin of the whole universe. That this state of things has been brought about by a mode of action as uniform and undeviating as the result is entire and harmonious, is every day becoming more and more apparent, and when the human mind shall cease to require abnormal marvels and supernatural incidents for its edification and amusement, the unity and immutability of God's laws will be fully recognised.

We are unable to penetrate retrospectively, as it appears to us, to that stage in the universal history, when the worlds were believed to have been evolved out of chaos; and although it is believed by many astronomers that such cosmical processes have not yet entirely ceased, but are

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going on in the distant heavens, it is impossible with our present instruments to verify these speculations, but we may, with the microscope's aid, watch somewhat analogous operations, revealing the creative or rather formative action of that unseen Power to which nothing is near, nothing distant, to whom great and small must be meaningless distinctions. Beauty, order, unity of design, and precision in execution may thus be brought under our very eyes and studied at our leisure.

If, for example, we take a little pure water, dissolve in it a small quantity of epsom salts, and then place a drop of the solution under the microscope, we find that for some time the field is as clear as though we were examining pure water only, or if the stage be perfectly steady we see nothing whatever except the glare of light. Presently, however, one or more crystals will begin visibly and more or less rapidly to grow as it were out of nothing. First a crystalline edge appears, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, two lines meeting in a rounded point, and to these lines or edges the invisible materials are added, so that the lines advance upon the field, and gradually become the sides of a well-formed solid crystal. Then the growth of that particular crystal ceases, and another makes its appearance, either springing from the one already formed, or as a distinct crystal in some other portion of the field, and this is repeated until all the salts in solution have become re-crystallised and the moisture has evaporated. The appearance of the whole is then very beautiful, a great number of exquisite crystals, which may have been formed in the course of a few minutes or even seconds, bristling up in every direction, and resembling the

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larger groups with which we are so well acquainted in art and nature; and no one who has witnessed the process and its accomplishment can have failed to be struck with the majesty and omnipotence of that Being, who has not only been occupied with the cosmical operations of the universe since its commencement, but who directs his forces into the minutest drop of fluid, and there with invisible materials, brings into existence a scene of beauty, order, and symmetry.

Nor are such marvels of nature confined to the inorganic creation. If instead of charging a drop of water with a soluble salt, we take a fine shaving from the skin of the seeds of certain flowering plants, notably of *Collomia grandiflora*, and placing this under the microscope, moisten it with a drop of water, a most extraordinary phenomenon is presented to the eye. A spiral fibre will suddenly uncoil itself and spring out from some portion of the dark fragment of seed; and this will be followed by another and another, until the whole field is covered with one writhing mass. This strange phenomenon not only affords an example of the Creator's power, operating in a minute organised structure, but it forcibly illustrates the well-established theory so frequently referred to in the earlier portions of the argument, that the so-called vital forces in nature are merely modifications of physical force. For these spiral structures, which appear to be instinct with life, and which are needed in the economy of the plant, lie coiled up on the coating of the seeds whilst they dry, and are there retained by a glutinous substance soluble in water; but when this substance is dissolved the spiral fibres are at once released, and by the mechanical

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action common to all elastic materials, they spring out one after the other and assume the appearance already described.

Nor need we limit our illustrations of the uniformity of divine action in nature to the vegetable world. In animal life it becomes still more apparent, and as we often find in that realm of nature the association of organised structures with an inorganic support or framework, there is scope (if the term be not considered irreverent when applied to Him whose power knows no bounds) for the display of the most exquisite art associated with the most beautiful forms and interesting operations of animated nature. The very lowest types of organised existence, indeed those which exhibit hardly any traces of organisation at all, are frequently accompanied by beautiful examples of divine art, and one group which has been delineated by a famous German physiologist* made such an impression upon the present writer, six years since, that he retains a vivid picture of them in his mind even at the present time.

> "What exquisite forms do these Radiolariæ exhibit! Some of them resemble globular groups of pearls, with a brilliant central gem of more solid consistency, the whole emitting bright rays (pseudopodia, or false feet) in every direction; and on examining the constituent globules each is found to be more or less highly organised. Others are still more beautiful and interesting; one, for example, resembles a conical Japanese hat of honeycombed silex, bristling all round the rim and on the apex with spikes, and harbouring in the crown of the silicious fabric the multicellular animalcule, from which innumerable rays are projected.

* Kölliker.

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> Another is a perfect silicious hollow sphere of filigree, in the centre of which floats a beautiful sun, whose rays penetrate the open framework of the globular case. A fourth, more exquisite perhaps than any of the preceding, might serve as the insignia of some noble order, for it presents the appearance of a jewelled star. The central portion is the hyaline animalcule resembling in appearance a globular pearl, from which project silicious rays, some lance-shaped, others straight, all meeting within the central globe. There are many more such forms, varying in the shape of the central soft parts, or in the radiating silicious skeleton, but all more or less graceful and elegant, and they have only to be seen once to render them eager objects of search and favourite subjects for investigation." *

Nor are these graceful forms to be found only in the lowest vitalised types, they present themselves in the more highly organised groups, sometimes as animated flowers, graceful in shape and of lovely hues, usually incased in calcareous or flinty tubes or sheaths, secreted and framed by the creatures whose fragile bodies they serve to protect. Sometimes those coverings are opaque and tinted, at others they are transparent, or entirely absent, and then the student of physiology may perceive within the body all the organs of animal life actively at work in the performance of their varied functions. The heart pulsating at regular intervals, the respiratory organs active, the glands filled with their coloured secretions, and the young creatures growing in the maternal ovary. So even in this minute localisation of the Divine Power we have a marked illustration of the principle that to Him there is nothing large and nothing small in nature.

* Review of Kölliker's 'Atlas der vergleichenden Gewebelehre.' Part I. Leipzig. Engelmann. Extracted from the 'Quarterly Journal of Science,' vol. ii., p. 534.

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And if we turn our eyes from the invisible to the visible world, what do we behold? The same scenes, the same action, the same end, the happiness, not of Man alone, but of all created beings. The groups of crystals are no longer restricted within the limits of a water-drop, they tower high in the heavens as domes or pinnacles, sometimes resembling closely the minute crystals we were just examining. But those rugged peaks were formed long, long before Man's eye could watch their growth, before his mind proceeded from that Heaven to which their summits figuratively point. And on those very summits there lies outspread a sheet of spotless snow, the constituent particles of which again resemble the diminutive formations that the microscope reveals, each crystal vieing with its neighbour in the beauty and variety of its pattern. So here, again, we have the vast and the diminutive in nature closely interlinked by that great Power which framed them both.

From those same summits he who has surmounted them looks down upon a varied scene on earth. His eye may follow in the valley all those graceful undulations which form so marked a contrast with the rigid lines and angles that limit Man's abodes. Beneath his very feet, perhaps, the hidden forces which contributed to raise the eminence on which he stands, imprisoned now by God's almighty hand, are striving and struggling to be free once more. Yonder is massed a sea of clouds, and there, with a warning sound which often comes too late, the natural forces find their vent more readily, flashing in angry lightning on some hapless wayfarer, or rending the oak of ages. As he descends, the traveller passes through an

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ever-changing scene, and he may witness nature's moods and aspects as they are ever manifested to the denizens of various lands and climates of the earth. Quitting the eternal snows, the bare grey rocks rising, it may be, here and there in pillared masses, crystals of hardest stone, he first arrives at levels where lichens and mosses, and the vegetation of the arctic zones abound. Here, if he list, his memory and imagination may carry him to lands where similar productions serve as food for elk and reindeer, animals for whose enjoyment a beneficent Creator has prepared such humble plants. Soon modest little flowers appear; the gentian first, a harbinger of lovely blossoms, massed in profusion lower down; and here, perhaps, the chamois bounding past reminds him of the approach of his congener, Man.

He makes his first appearance as a fell destroyer, an animal in search of prey, with leaden bullets more unerring than the tiger's claws or serpent's fangs; and so the gentle creature, instinct with life a moment previously, and bounding happily along from crag to crag, sniffing the mountain air, or signalling its mate, falls panting and bleeding at his very feet, casting towards him who soon will feed upon its flesh, a soft appealing glance that speaks reproachfully of love and pity which should stir the human breast. Down he descends to pine and fir plantations, trees of whose useful products all the cottages below are framed, and all their household furniture constructed. Humble but precious wood, one of the greatest gifts of God to man! Down lower still, and he arrives at temperate zones, where fertile meadows, "with verdure clad," and waving fields of golden corn, reward the sower's

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toil; and where the harvest-home is being celebrated by a merry throng, with joy of work accomplished stamped on every brow. Should he descend in warmer regions, he may witness scenes in nature so luxuriant as to remind him of the songs of Eastern bards of old. There he may see the "cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted"; may hear "the young lions roar after their prey, seeking their meat from God." He may admire the stately palm, of which the fruit, the leaves, the bark, the trunk, each is a separate boon to Man, for raiment, food, or shelter. There birds and insects vie with one another which shall win his admiration for their Maker.

It may be that some village nearer home is his first resting-place; and entering its modest churchyard, he may stay to admire a graceful willow drooping o'er a grave. Its branches, bending downwards, may remind him of his future resting-place, and make his heart grow sad, although the neighbouring spire attracts his gaze towards heaven. But then, does every tree direct the pilgrim's thoughts to earth? Is it not that alone which decorates his mortal grave? Whilst of the rest it may be said, or sung:—

Rooted in earth they firmly stand,
Raising their heads by God's command;
And thus to earth stand rooted, we,
The body chained, the Spirit free.

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XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THE VIEW OF GOD IN SCIENCE AND TRADITION.

In tracing the traditionary picture of the Deity in the first Part of this work, we confined ourselves to the views of an important section of ancient monotheists, and of their modern Trinitarian descendants in the Western world; but those who desire to obtain a faithful image of the Divinity as He has been hitherto reflected in the human mind, must of course also direct their attention to other revelations of his nature. They must follow the rise and progress of those religious faiths which number their hundreds of millions of followers, and which have exercised so powerful an influence on Eastern society and civilisation. Still more superficial and imperfect has been the survey of nature from which we have endeavoured to obtain a faint conception of the Ruler of the universe as He is revealed by science, and it would not be surprising, therefore, if on comparing those two faulty and defective ideals we failed to recognise in them one and the same perfect Being, the God of nature and of Man.

But making every allowance for the incapacity of the artist and for the ignorance of the age; and admitting that if even the ablest hands and noblest mind had photographed the pictures, they would still have to be returned to the dark chamber of the future to become developed under the influence of clearer intellects and purer senses; still the

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fact remains that if the Ruler of the universe and the Father of the human race be One, then, as soon as we are able to obtain definite views of him as He appears to us in his two aspects, their simultaneous observation should disclose well-marked features identical in both, and there should be presented to our mind's eye a more real, prominent, and lifelike conception of the Divine Being than could be obtained from the contemplation of either picture viewed alone.

Tradition and Science, then, agree in teaching us that there exists an active, intelligent, personal Power, which imparts life and motion to the universe. Those who have made the acts and thoughts of men their chief study, and have watched the higher influence which has shaped the destiny of our race, have called that power "God," or the "Good Spirit," comparing him to a human mind and investing him with human qualities. The existence of such a Being and our consciousness of his active presence lend a positive sanction to that view of him, which is however modified by scientific research and the observation of the vast universe, so far as to suggest that we possess only a portion of his attributes, and are therefore but partially able to understand his nature. Those, on the other hand, who have made physical science their study, and who have always had before their eyes visible effects produced by visible or invisible causes, have designated him the great "First Cause." To the former class of thinkers He has been the omniscient Guide and Ruler of men; to the latter the unerring and omnipotent Power that moulds and governs all creation, and the joint investigations of both have shown that his action in the universe is feebly reflected in the acts and demeanour of men towards each other and towards

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their humbler fellow-creatures. Both agree, then, in spirit, if not in words, in believing that "God has made man in His own image"; and the comparison of such examples of His prescience or forethought as the storing up of valuable mineral productions in the earth's bosom, or the rearing of useful plants upon its surface for the benefit of Man and the lower animals, with those rational and instinctive acts of men and the animal races by which they, too, provide for their future sustenance and welfare, has led to the association of those two ideas, the Good Spirit and the prescient First Cause in the universally accepted view of a beneficent superintending "Providence," watching everlastingly over the welfare of his Creation.

And whilst theologians have from all time felt that his influence penetrates into the inmost recesses of the human soul, interpreting the thoughts of men, estimating their still unfulfilled intentions, and establishing his laws in their consciences, so men of science know full well that there is no part of nature, visible or invisible, to which his physical power does not extend; that there exist whole worlds of living beings which have thus far eluded their keenest senses aided by their most perfectly constructed instruments of observation; and science and tradition, therefore, present to our admiring and adoring gaze a real, living, active, thinking Person; a Providence co-extensive with the universe which his care enfolds and his action pervades in every part, and without whose animating presence all would be silent, dark, and motionless. His presence and his power, however, vivify the universe, imparting life and motion to material atoms, inducing constant change, unfolding, every instant, beautiful and novel forms of life;

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bathing this world in sunshine now, and heightening its activity; then leaving it in shade and partial rest whilst other worlds are blessed and stimulated by his morning light.

Tradition and science teach us, too, that He who rules the universe has also made it what it is to-day. Neither pretends to say how Matter first originated or whether it ever did originate, and only patient search and accurate investigation can disclose the how and when of the vast world's nativity. However crude the views of men have been, however childish and mysterious their language, all are agreed that one presiding Genius has ever ruled in time and space; that He who does the work to-day began it too, and follows its development to ultimate perfection. And both experiences teach us that the intelligent personal Deity who framed and rules the universe is almighty and irresistible. Although in history, the selfish and mischievous actions of bad men have appeared for a time to prevail over what was obviously the good-will of God, and though empires and dynasties may have decayed and sunk through the vices and degeneracy of men and races of men, yet in the long run the influence of the perfect Mind and higher Will has always predominated. That which the conscience of Man has taught him to be noble, just, and true, has ever found able advocates and defenders, and the most powerful tyrants and evil-doers have often quailed before the regards of feebler mortals armed only with right and justice. If the decay of mighty empires has left confusion and almost utter darkness in portions of the world, the continuity of progress in the human race has never been permanently broken, and a new and better civilisation

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springing from some germ which had escaped the destructive agencies at work, has always risen upon the embers of the departed one. The testimony of this progress is before us still. We see the ancient temples, vast in size but often rude in workmanship, which formerly were built amidst the groans and blood of slaves, to honour monstrous gods in heaven and greater monsters still on earth; we see more modest but more tasteful edifices rise up about us every day, in which the spiritual God is worshipped; and statues of the humble benefactors of their race are fast supplanting those of tyrants, warriors, and kings.

In the experiences of the man of science, too, there may be found stories of cataclysms and revolutions which have changed the aspect of nature and perhaps destroyed whole tribes of living beings; but from the humblest crinoid to the well-developed if not perfect Man, there has been obviously a slow but irresistible progression from the inferior to the superior in body as in mind. And just as history records the rise and fall of human states and empires, each stage of civilisation giving place to one still higher; so, too, the natural record shows a regular succession of physical phenomena, a course of mighty changes in the globe, whereby its surface was transformed; and tribes of plants and animals, each dominant for a time, have slowly disappeared and given place to others better fitted for the changed conditions of the surface. Recent researches have tended greatly to establish this connection, and confirm the theory of evolution. Not only, it would seem, has Man progressed from barbarism to his present state, but probably he was developed from a lower type of animals than himself, towering above his fellow-creatures

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like some giant of the forest, blessed with more space and sunlight than its neighbours. As yet the mass of thinkers fail to appreciate the significance of this great discovery. Angels as some believe themselves to be, they cling to the decaying flesh, claiming their heavenly heritage from myth and miracle, rather than earning it by godlike work. But be that as it may, science and tradition both proclaim the intelligent Framer and Governor of the world to be omnipotent and irresistible as He is steady and unerring in the execution of his scheme.

The mode in which that plan is carried out reveals the Deity to us in nature and in history, to be the author of what we designate the Beautiful and True. In bygone ages the adoring Psalmist sang: "Neither are there any works like unto thy works," and to-day the scientific naturalist unconsciously echoes the sentiment in reason's ear when he says that nature's productions are "far truer in character than man's productions."* But when we try to copy nature's works, to modify or vary them, then we find what clumsy and inexperienced artisans we are compared with the invisible Artificer of the universe. Our most important works are often fraught with toil and suffering, whilst He appears to perfect with the same facility a peopled globe or an expanding blossom.

In science and tradition, mental truth and beauty are revealed as well as physical. The tales of courage, heroism, and confidence in God's decrees which form so many episodes in Man's progression, perpetuating the names and influence of the wisest and the best, those find their counterparts in nature, where parental love and courage in

* Darwin, see *ante*, p. 146.

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the untutored brutes, and in domesticated races fond attachment to the highest living creature, Man, are powerful agencies in that selection which leads to the "survival of the fittest" and causes nature's face to wear the bloom of an eternal youth.

But it is impossible to avoid perceiving in either picture that the acts of God and his decrees are often terrible; sometimes mysteriously severe. In nature we have floods, eruptions, earthquakes, burying alike the guilty and the innocent; the lightning darting from the skies and striking indiscriminately the just and the unjust; the fierce tiger pouncing with sharpened teeth and claws upon the gentle deer; these proclaim the terrible God. Whilst history and tradition frequently record sad tales of tyranny and wrong triumphant and apparently unpunished; of the cruelty of Man towards the noblest of his race; of burning, slaughtering, and mutilation; of battle, murder, and of sudden death. And if those horrors are not to be laid to the charge of the beneficent Ruler of the universe, but are the necessary consequences of Man's possessing a free will to choose between right and wrong, at least He tolerates them, and often appears through such toleration to attain his wisest ends.

The association of the terrible with the gentle in Creation has formed the theme of human speculation and controversy since the world began; and almost as many attempts have been made to unravel that mystery, as to account for the origin of life upon the globe—and with about the same success. The most popular theological doctrine of our day which teaches of the origin and existence of sin and suffering on earth, has necessitated the slaying of the Deity himself in

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human form; whilst in order to account for the presence of life upon the globe, a modern savant who occupies the highest rank that Science offers, has been reduced to the expedient of assuming the destruction of some other world! To say, we cannot understand the association of the terrible and mild in divine government; why pain and suffering and wrong are tolerated in the universe, is simply to admit our ignorance of the object of the Deity in having made the world progressive and not in the first instance perfect; but even here reflection shows us that what we regard as evil is often good disguised. When the waves of the ocean have swept over some ill-fated vessel which has been launched or put to sea in an unfit state to cope with the elements, and when sorrowing hearts have felt the results of human apathy or ignorance, then are the noblest sentiments awakened for the survivors, and means are taken to alleviate their distress; whilst the energies of enterprising men are stimulated, and measures result which not alone obviate the occurrence of a similar catastrophe, but lead to new advances in civilisation and the material welfare of the race.

It may be said that this is a cold and unsympathetic solution of the problem of human suffering and of those methods of Providence which appear hard and punitive; that it is better fitted for the closet of the philosopher than for the wants and aspirations of society. Still it is incontrovertible that physical catastrophes and mental suffering; that the destructive action of the elements, the ravages of sickness, the early death of those we hold most dear, and those afflictions which appear abnormal and inconsistent with the benignity and mercy of the Almighty, proclaim

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him to have been from time immemorial the Guide and Teacher of our race. Tradition has so represented him from the earliest ages; for have not the moral and religious doctrines of divinely inspired men ever been enforced by physical punishments and sanctioned by material rewards?

> "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."
>
> "He that sacrificeth to any God save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed."
>
> "Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction."
>
> "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just."

These, and such as these have been the divine commands from the most ancient days, and if it be objected that the undutiful son and the idol-worshipper have frequently survived, whilst filial love and faithful service of God have often been cut short in their prime, that has arisen from causes which in no way affect the great truths conveyed by the injunctions.

The physical laws of nature are of necessity concordant with the moral laws of God, for both are his laws, and if we discard the form in which they were conveyed to men in the olden time, the substance still remains the same. The view is fast disappearing from amongst intelligent men that the Almighty punishes moral and religious dereliction of duty with immediate or direct physical suffering; so the most narrow-minded bigot would now hesitate to avow his belief that the conflagration of a Roman Catholic chapel is an evidence of God's disapproval of image-worship. But mediately the principle holds good that moral or religious neglect is surely visited by physical punishment. A man

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may to all appearance lead a holy and a virtuous life, and it may be deemed an unmerited affliction if his home be rendered desolate by disease and death; but if we come to inquire into the circumstances we may find that amidst all his wealth and comforts, he has looked on complacently whilst death was committing ravages amongst the poor in his immediate neighbourhood, conceiving it to be no business of his to interfere, until a shaft, apparently accidental, penetrates into his household to remind him that he has duties to perform outside his own circle. Disregard of the laws of nature, too, has the direct effect of incapacitating men for the reception of divine influences, of rendering the body an unfit instrument for the exercise of godlike powers; but the Deity does not for a long time, if ever he does, entirely withdraw those powers or withhold his spiritual benefits. He inflicts physical pain for physical neglect, and the punishment is usually in exact measure with the neglect or wrong committed. Moreover, although abnormal or extraordinary physical punishments may not follow the commission of wrong-doing, yet the state of mind which induces or allows men to commit such wrong, leads them also to regard some of the ordinary events of life, which to a healthy mind would present no moral significance, as visitations of Providence for their sins. So, whether we regard the plagues which tormented Pharaoh, as direct admonitions from on high, to warn him that he should release the children of Israel from bondage, or whether it was his conscience that so construed the natural visitations which even to this day are not uncommon in those lands, the moral effect was still the same, and the tale of God's repeated warnings ere the heavy blow was

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struck may be read and pondered over now, in the events of our every-day existence. The lesson which is beginning to be learned from a dispassionate consideration of the subject, is that physical evils must be removed by physical curatives, whilst moral and religious evils require the application of intellectual remedies; and when these truths come to be well understood and acted upon, the view of the Deity in this respect will be elevated and refined. But even now, whilst science and tradition represent the Almighty as stern and irresistible in dispensing justice and in the maintenance of right, they equally agree in teaching that his frown is only to be feared by evil-doers, and his chastisements are but examples of his universal love.

Nature and history teem with illustrations of his great beneficence and of his good-will towards men; the woods and meadows are alive with song poured forth by living creatures in unconscious tribute to their Maker for the joyous life He gives them, for the daily food his bounty has provided; whilst conscious Man exerts his highest powers to praise and thank Him for the gift of life with all its varied blessings and enjoyments. A large proportion of the natural operations needed to maintain that life take place amidst sensations of enjoyment; fatigue and toil have their accompanying pleasures, whilst even sickness has its consolation.

In history and tradition, although the sanguinary acts of men are frequently attributed to God, the goodness of his ends is never doubted. The method may be human; the aim, however, is invariably divine. The maintenance of honour and nobility of thought, the triumph over guilt, of

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innocence and holiness, the prevalence of right and justice, and the happiness and welfare of society; those are the aims to which the thoughts of godly men have ever been directed, to which their highest efforts have been dedicated, and which He is always represented as encouraging by word and deed.

So, when we contemplate the picture of the one eternal heavenly Being as it is drawn by science and tradition, we perceive a personal Divinity, invisible to sense but most conspicuous and prominent of all existences to mental view; most steadfast in the occupation of men's thoughts. We see an ever-active Intellect pervading nature; wielding, in love and wisdom, forces irresistible which permeate the universe and penetrate beyond the range of human vision; imparting power and sense and various degrees of consciousness to happy active creatures which He alone could frame, and has endowed with life, to act as secondary agents in the operation of his mighty Will. We see a Judge, unchanging, just, and calm, forbearing long with sin and seeking ever to reform; unflinching in the execution of his physical and moral laws; inexorable in his demand for justice, but ever ready to forgive the truly sorrowful and repentant, and crowning virtue and nobility of soul with blessings indescribable. We see a father's powerful guardianship, a mother's tender care, the love of brother, sister, wife, all centred in the Parent of the universe and lavished on the creatures of his birth. We see a heavenly Artificer creating, every instant, forms of beauty, perfect in design, in hue harmonious; some old, some new; endowing them with life and thought from his own infinite re-

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sources, and leaving on their front the stamp of his superior workmanship, the signet of his power and love, that every man may wonder and adore, and imitate the Maker.

We see Him thus engaged, not only on our globe, but also, as investigation teaches, and as reason would suggest, upon the distant worlds around; distant to us, but not to Him who knows nor time nor space. Those are replenished, too, with his productions, teeming with active creatures which reflect his wisdom, power, and goodness. We long to penetrate to those vast spheres and see what novelties of his creation there exist to charm the sense and educate the intellect. We often stand in fancy on some other world of his, and see our own, a pigmy in the skies; or gaze upon the central sun diminished or enlarged by distance. And so, too, does the glory of our God; his life-inspiring influence, increase or lessen to our mental view as we approach his holy presence, or withdraw ourselves from his vicinity.

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